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HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
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# CARLYLE'S LAUGH
## AND OTHER SURPRISES

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BY

THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
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# NOTE

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T. W. H.

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# I

# CARLYLE'S LAUGH

# CARLYLE'S LAUGH

None of the many sketches of Carlyle that have been published since his death have brought out quite distinctly enough the thing which struck me more forcibly than all else, when in the actual presence of the man; namely, the peculiar quality and expression of his laugh. It need hardly be said that there is a great deal in a laugh. One of the most telling pieces of oratory that ever reached my ears was Victor Hugo's vindication, at the Voltaire Centenary in Paris, of that author's smile. To be sure, Carlyle's laugh was not like that smile, but it was something as inseparable from his personality, and as essential to the account, when making up one's estimate of him. It was as individually characteristic as his face or his dress, or his way of talking or of writing. Indeed, it seemed indispensable for the explanation of all of these. I found in looking back upon my first interview with him, that all I had known of Carlyle through others, or through his own books, for twenty-five years, had been utterly defective, — had left out, in fact, the key to his whole nature, — inasmuch as nobody had ever described to me his laugh.

It is impossible to follow the matter further without a little bit of personal narration. On visiting England for the first time, in 1872, I was offered a letter to Carlyle, and declined it. Like all of my own generation, I had been under some personal obligations to him for his early writings, — though in my case this debt was trifling compared with that due to Emerson, — but his "Latter-Day Pamphlets" and his reported utterances on American affairs had taken away all special desire to meet him, besides the ungraciousness said to mark his demeanor toward visitors from the United States. Yet, when I was once fairly launched in that fascinating world of London society, where the American sees, as Willis used to say, whole shelves of his library walking about in coats and gowns, this disinclination rapidly softened. And when Mr. Froude kindly offered to take me with him for one of his afternoon calls on Carlyle, and further proposed that I should join them in their habitual walk through the parks, it was not in human nature — or at least in American nature — to resist.

We accordingly went after lunch, one day in May, to Carlyle's modest house in Chelsea, and found him in his study, reading — by a chance very appropriate for me — in Weiss's "Life of Parker." He received us kindly, but

at once began inveighing against the want of arrangement in the book he was reading, the defective grouping of the different parts, and the impossibility of finding anything in it, even by aid of the index. He then went on to speak of Parker himself, and of other Americans whom he had met. I do not recall the details of the conversation, but to my surprise he did not say a single really offensive or ungracious thing. If he did, it related less to my countrymen than to his own, for I remember his saying some rather stern things about Scotchmen. But that which saved these and all his sharpest words from being actually offensive was this, that, after the most vehement tirade, he would suddenly pause, throw his head back, and give as genuine and kindly a laugh as I ever heard from a human being. It was not the bitter laugh of the cynic, nor yet the big-bodied laugh of the burly joker; least of all was it the thin and rasping cackle of the dyspeptic satirist. It was a broad, honest, human laugh, which, beginning in the brain, took into its action the whole heart and diaphragm, and instantly changed the worn face into something frank and even winning, giving to it an expression that would have won the confidence of any child. Nor did it convey the impression of an exceptional thing that had occurred for the first time that day, and might

never happen again. Rather, it produced the effect of something habitual; of being the channel, well worn for years, by which the overflow of a strong nature was discharged. It cleared the air like thunder, and left the atmosphere sweet. It seemed to say to himself, if not to us, "Do not let us take this too seriously; it is my way of putting things. What refuge is there for a man who looks below the surface in a world like this, except to laugh now and then?" The laugh, in short, revealed the humorist; if I said the genial humorist, wearing a mask of grimness, I should hardly go too far for the impression it left. At any rate, it shifted the ground, and transferred the whole matter to that realm of thought where men play with things. The instant Carlyle laughed, he seemed to take the counsel of his old friend Emerson, and to write upon the lintels of his doorway, "Whim."

Whether this interpretation be right or wrong, it is certain that the effect of this new point of view upon one of his visitors was wholly disarming. The bitter and unlovely vision vanished; my armed neutrality went with it, and there I sat talking with Carlyle as fearlessly as if he were an old friend. The talk soon fell on the most dangerous of all ground, our Civil War, which was then near enough to inspire curiosity; and he put questions showing that he

had, after all, considered the matter in a sane and reasonable way. He was especially interested in the freed slaves and the colored troops; he said but little, yet that was always to the point, and without one ungenerous word. On the contrary, he showed more readiness to comprehend the situation, as it existed after the war, than was to be found in most Englishmen at that time. The need of giving the ballot to the former slaves he readily admitted, when it was explained to him; and he at once volunteered the remark that in a republic they needed this, as the guarantee of their freedom. "You could do no less," he said, "for the men who had stood by you." I could scarcely convince my senses that this manly and reasonable critic was the terrible Carlyle, the hater of "Cuffee" and "Quashee" and of all republican government. If at times a trace of angry exaggeration showed itself, the good, sunny laugh came in and cleared the air.

We walked beneath the lovely trees of Kensington Gardens, then in the glory of an English May; and I had my first sight of the endless procession of riders and equipages in Rotten Row. My two companions received numerous greetings, and as I walked in safe obscurity by their side, I could cast sly glances of keen enjoyment at the odd combination visible in their

looks. Froude's fine face and bearing became familiar afterwards to Americans, and he was irreproachably dressed ; while probably no salutation was ever bestowed from an elegant passing carriage on an odder figure than Carlyle. Tall, very thin, and slightly stooping ; with unkempt, grizzly whiskers pushed up by a high collar, and kept down by an ancient felt hat; wearing an old faded frock coat, checked waistcoat, coarse gray trousers, and russet shoes ; holding a stout stick, with his hands encased in very large gray woolen gloves, —this was Carlyle. I noticed that, when we first left his house, his aspect attracted no notice in the streets, being doubtless familiar in his own neighborhood; but as we went farther and farther on, many eyes were turned in his direction, and men sometimes stopped to gaze at him. Little he noticed it, however, as he plodded along with his eyes cast down or looking straight before him, while his lips poured forth an endless stream of talk. Once and once only he was accosted, and forced to answer ; and I recall it with delight as showing how the unerring instinct of childhood coincided with mine, and pronounced him not a man to be feared.

We passed a spot where some nobleman's grounds were being appropriated for a public park; it was only lately that people had been

allowed to cross them, and all was in the rough, preparations for the change having been begun. Part of the turf had been torn up for a roadway, but there was a little emerald strip where three or four ragged children, the oldest not over ten, were turning somersaults in great delight. As we approached, they paused and looked shyly at us, as if uncertain of their right on these premises; and I could see the oldest, a sharp-eyed little London boy, reviewing us with one keen glance, as if selecting him in whom confidence might best be placed. Now I am myself a child-loving person; and I had seen with pleasure Mr. Froude's kindly ways with his own youthful household: yet the little *gamin* dismissed us with a glance and fastened on Carlyle. Pausing on one foot, as if ready to take to his heels on the least discouragement, he called out the daring question, "I say, mister, may we roll on this here grass?" The philosopher faced round, leaning on his staff, and replied in a homelier Scotch accent than I had yet heard him use, "Yes, my little fellow, r-r-roll at discraytion!" Instantly the children resumed their antics, while one little girl repeated meditatively, "He says we may roll at discraytion!" — as if it were some new kind of ninepin-ball.

Six years later, I went with my friend Conway to call on Mr. Carlyle once more, and found the

kindly laugh still there, though changed, like all else in him, by the advance of years and the solitude of existence. It could not be said of him that he grew old happily, but he did not grow old unkindly, I should say ; it was painful to see him, but it was because one pitied him, not by reason of resentment suggested by anything on his part. He announced himself to be, and he visibly was, a man left behind by time and waiting for death. He seemed in a manner sunk within himself ; but I remember well the affectionate way in which he spoke of Emerson, who had just sent him the address entitled "The Future of the Republic." Carlyle remarked, "I've just noo been reading it ; the dear Emerson, he thinks the whole warrld's like himself ; and if he can just get a million people together and let them all vote, they'll be sure to vote right and all will go vara weel" ; and then came in the brave laugh of old, but briefer and less hearty by reason of years and sorrows.

One may well hesitate before obtruding upon the public any such private impressions of an eminent man. They will always appear either too personal or too trivial. But I have waited in vain to see some justice done to the side of Carlyle here portrayed ; and since it has been very commonly asserted that the effect he produced on strangers was that of a rude and offensive per-

son, it seems almost a duty to testify to the very different way in which one American visitor saw him. An impression produced at two interviews, six years apart, may be worth recording, especially if it proved strong enough to outweigh all previous prejudice and antagonism.

In fine, I should be inclined to appeal from all Carlyle's apparent bitterness and injustice to the mere quality of his laugh, as giving sufficient proof that the gift of humor underlay all else in him. All his critics, I now think, treat him a little too seriously. No matter what his labors or his purposes, the attitude of the humorist was always behind. As I write, there lies before me a scrap from the original manuscript of his "French Revolution," — the page being written, after the custom of English authors of half a century ago, on both sides of the paper; and as I study it, every curl and twist of the handwriting, every backstroke of the pen, every substitution of a more piquant word for a plainer one, bespeaks the man of whim. Perhaps this quality came by nature through a Scotch ancestry; perhaps it was strengthened by the accidental course of his early reading. It may be that it was Richter who moulded him, after all, rather than Goethe; and we know that Richter was defined by Carlyle, in his very first literary essay, as "a humorist and a philosopher," put-

ting the humorist first. The German author's favorite type of character — seen to best advantage in his Siebenkäs of the "Blumen, Frucht, und Dornenstücke" — came nearer to the actual Carlyle than most of the grave portraitures yet executed. He, as is said of Siebenkäs, disguised his heart beneath a grotesque mask, partly for greater freedom, and partly because he preferred whimsically to exaggerate human folly rather than to share it (*dass er die menschliche Thorheit mehr travestiere als nachahme*). Both characters might be well summed up in the brief sentence which follows: "A humorist in action is but a satirical improvisatore" (*Ein handelnder Humorist ist blos ein satirischer Improvisatore*). This last phrase, "a satirical improvisatore," seems to me better than any other to describe Carlyle.

# II

# A SHELLEY MANUSCRIPT

# A SHELLEY MANUSCRIPT

Were I to hear to-morrow that the main library of Harvard University, with every one of its 496,200 volumes, had been reduced to ashes, there is in my mind no question what book I should most regret. It is that unique, battered, dingy little quarto volume of Shelley's manuscript poems, in his own handwriting and that of his wife, first given by Miss Jane Clairmont (Shelley's "Constantia") to Mr. Edward A. Silsbee, and then presented by him to the library. Not only is it full of that aroma of fascination which belongs to the actual handiwork of a master, but its numerous corrections and interlineations make the reader feel that he is actually traveling in the pathway of that delicate mind. Professor George E. Woodberry had the use of it; he printed in the "Harvard University Calendar" a facsimile of the "Ode to a Skylark" as given in the manuscript, and has cited many of its various readings in his edition of Shelley's poems. But he has passed by a good many others; and some of these need, I think, for the sake of all students of Shelley, to be put in print, so that in case of the loss or

destruction of the precious volume, these fragments at least may be preserved.

There occur in this manuscript the following variations from Professor Woodberry's text of "The Sensitive Plant" — variations not mentioned by him, for some reason or other, in his footnotes or supplemental notes, and yet not canceled by Shelley: —

"Three days the flowers of the garden fair
Like stars when the moon is awakened, were."
III, 1–2.

[*Moon* is clearly *morn* in the Harvard MS.]

"And under the roots of the Sensitive Plant."
III, 100.

[The prefatory *And* is not in the Harvard MS.]

"But the mandrakes and toadstools and docks and darnels
Rose like the dead from their ruined charnels."
III, 112.

[The word *brambles* appears for *mandrakes* in the Harvard MS.]

These three variations, all of which are interesting, are the only ones I have noted as uncanceled in this particular poem, beyond those recorded by Professor Woodberry. But there are many cases where the manuscript shows, in Shelley's own handwriting, variations subsequently canceled by him; and these deserve

study by all students of the poetic art. His ear was so exquisite and his sense of the *balance* of a phrase so remarkable, that it is always interesting to see the path by which he came to the final utterance, whatever that was. I have, therefore, copied a number of these modified lines, giving, first, Professor Woodberry's text, and then the original form of language, as it appears in Shelley's handwriting, italicizing the words which vary, and giving the pages of Professor Woodberry's edition. The cancelation or change is sometimes made in pen, sometimes in pencil; and it is possible that, in a few cases, it may have been made by Mrs. Shelley.

"Gazed through clear dew on the tender sky."

"Gazed through *its tears* on the tender sky."

I, 36.

"The beams which dart from many a star
Of the flowers whose hues they bear afar."

"The beams which dart from many a *sphere*
Of the *starry* flowers whose hues they bear."

I, 81–82.

"The unseen clouds of the dew, which lie
Like fire in the flowers till the sun rides high,
Then wander like spirits among the spheres
Each cloud faint with the fragrance it bears."

"The unseen clouds of the dew, which *lay*
Like fire in the flowers till *dawning day*,

Then *walk* like spirits among the spheres
Each *one* faint with the *odor* it bears."

I, 86–89.

"Like windless clouds o'er a tender sky."

"Like windless clouds *in* a tender sky."

I, 98.

"Whose waves never mark, though they ever impress."

"Whose waves never *wrinkle*, though they impress."

I, 106.

"Was as God is to the starry scheme,"

"Was as *is God* to the starry scheme."

I, 4.

"As if some bright spirit for her sweet sake
Had deserted heaven while the stars were awake."

"As some bright spirit for her sweet sake
Had deserted *the* heaven while the stars were awake."

II, 17–18.

"The freshest her gentle hands could pull."

"The freshest her gentle hands could *cull*."

II, 46.

"The sweet lips of the flowers and harm not, did she."

"The sweet lips of flowers," etc.

II, 51.

"Edge of the odorous cedar bark."

"Edge of the odorous *cypress* bark."

II, 56.

"Sent through the pores of the coffin plank."

"*Ran* through," etc.

III, 12.

"Between the time of the wind and the snow."

"Between the *term*," etc. [probably accidental].

III, 50.

"Dammed it up with roots knotted like water-snakes."

"Dammed it with," etc.

III, 69.

"At noon they were seen, at noon they were felt."

"At noon they were seen & noon they were felt."

III, 73.

["&" perhaps written carelessly for "at."]

"Their decay and sudden flight from frost."

"Their decay and sudden flight from *the* frost."

III, 98.

"To own that death itself must be."

"To *think* that," etc.

III, 128.

These comparisons are here carried no further than "The Sensitive Plant," except that

there is a canceled verse of Shelley's "Curse" against Lord Eldon for depriving him of his children, — a verse so touching that I think it should be preserved. The verse beginning —

"By those unpractised accents of young speech,"

opened originally as follows: —

"By that sweet voice which who could understand
To frame to sounds of love and lore divine,
Not thou."

This was abandoned and the following substituted: —

"By those pure accents which at my command
Should have been framed to love and lore divine,
Now like a lute, fretted by some rude hand,
Uttering harsh discords, they must echo thine."

This also was erased, and the present form substituted, although I confess it seems to me both less vigorous and less tender. Professor Woodberry mentions the change, but does not give the canceled verse. In this and other cases I do not venture to blame him for the omission, since an editor must, after all, exercise his own judgment. Yet I cannot but wish that he had carried his citation, even of canceled variations, a little further; and it is evident that some future student of poetic art will yet find rich gleanings in the Harvard Shelley manuscript.

# III

# A KEATS MANUSCRIPT

Pierce Library
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# A KEATS MANUSCRIPT

"Touch it," said Leigh Hunt, when he showed Bayard Taylor a lock of brown silky hair, "and you will have touched Milton's self." The magic of the lock of hair is akin to that recognized by nomadic and untamed races in anything that has been worn close to the person of a great or fortunate being. Mr. Leland, much reverenced by the gypsies, whose language he spoke and whose lore he knew better than they know it, had a knife about his person which was supposed by them to secure the granting of any request if held in the hand. When he gave it away, it was like the transfer of fairy power to the happy recipient. The same lucky spell is attributed to a piece of the bride's garter, in Normandy, or to pins filched from her dress, in Sussex. For those more cultivated, the charm of this transmitted personality is best embodied in autographs, and the more unstudied and unpremeditated the better. In the case of a poet, nothing can be compared with the interest inspired by the first draft of a poem, with its successive amendments — the path by which his thought attained its final and perfect utterance. Tenny-

son, for instance, was said to be very indignant with those who bore away from his study certain rough drafts of poems, justly holding that the world had no right to any but the completed form. Yet this is what, as students of poetry, we all instinctively wish to do. Rightly or wrongly, we long to trace the successive steps. To some extent, the same opportunity is given in successive editions of the printed work; but here the study is not so much of changes in the poet's own mind as of those produced by the criticisms, often dull or ignorant, of his readers,—those especially who fail to catch a poet's very finest thought, and persuade him to dilute it a little for their satisfaction. When I pointed out to Browning some rather unfortunate alterations in his later editions, and charged him with having made them to accommodate stupid people, he admitted the offense and promised to alter them back again, although, of course, he never did. But the changes in an author's manuscript almost always come either from his own finer perception and steady advance toward the precise conveyance of his own thought, or else from the aid he receives in this from some immediate friend or adviser — most likely a woman — who is in close sympathy with his own mood. The charm is greatest, of course, in seeing and studying and touching the original

page, just as it is. For this a photograph is the best substitute, since it preserves the original for the eye, as does the phonograph for the ear. Even with the aid of photography only, there is as much difference between the final corrected shape and the page showing the gradual changes, as between the graceful yacht lying in harbor, anchored, motionless, with sails furled, and the same yacht as a winged creature, gliding into port. Let us now see, by actual comparison, how one of Keats's yachts came in.

There lies before me a photograph of the first two stanzas of Keats's "Ode on Melancholy," as they stood when just written. The manuscript page containing them was given to John Howard Payne by George Keats, the poet's brother, who lived for many years at Louisville, Kentucky, and died there; but it now belongs to Mr. R. S. Chilton, United States Consul at Goderich, Ontario, who has kindly given me a photograph of it. The verses are in Keats's well-known and delicate handwriting, and exhibit a series of erasures and substitutions which are now most interesting, inasmuch as the changes in each instance enrich greatly the value of the word-painting.

To begin with, the title varies slightly from that first adopted, and reads simply "On Melancholy," to which the word "Ode" was later pre-

fixed by the printers. In the second line, where he had half written "Henbane" for the material of his incantation, he blots it out and puts "Wolfsbane," instantly abandoning the tamer suggestion and bringing in all the wildness and the superstition that have gathered for years around the Loup-garou and the Wehr-wolf. This is plainly no amendment suggested afterward by another person, but is due unmistakably to the quick action of his own mind. There is no other change until the end of the first stanza, where the last two lines were originally written thus: —

> "For shade to shade will come too heavily
> And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul."

It is noticeable that he originally wrote "down" for "drown," and, in afterward inserting the *r*, put it in the wrong place — after the *o*, instead of before it. This was a slip of the pen only; but it was that word "heavily" which cost him a struggle. The words "too heavily" were next crossed out, and under them were written "too sleepily"; then this last word was again erased, and the word "drowsily" was finally substituted — the only expression in the English language, perhaps, which could have precisely indicated the exact shade of debilitating languor he meant.

On Melancholy

No No go not to Lethe neither twist
~~[illegible]~~ Wolfs bane, tight rooted, for its poisonous wine
Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kist
By Night shade, ruby grape of Proserpine
Make not your Rosary of yew berries
Nor let the Beetle or the death moth lies
Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl
A partner in your sorrows mysteries
For shade to shade will come ~~to heavily~~ too slapily drowsy
And drown the wakeful anguish of the Soul
But when the melancholy fit shall ~~[illegible]~~ fall
Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud
That fosters the droopheaded flowers all
And hides the green hills in an April
Then ~~feed~~ glut thy sorrow on a morning rose
Or on the rain-bow of the ~~dating~~ salt sand wave
Or on the wealth of globed Pionies
Or if the Mistress some rich anger shows
Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave
And feed deep deep upon her peerless eyes

In the other stanza, it is noticeable that he spells "melancholy," through heedlessness, "melanancholy," which gives a curious effect of prolonging and deepening the incantation; and this error he does not discover or correct. In the same way he spells "fit," "fitt," having perhaps in mind the "fytte" of the earlier poets. These are trifles, but when he alters the line, which originally stood, —

"But when the melancholy fit shall come,"

and for "come" substitutes "fall," we see at once, besides the merit of the soft alliteration, that he gives more of the effect of doom and suddenness. "Come" was clearly too business like. Afterwards, instead of —

"Then feed thy sorrow on a morning rose,"

he substitutes for "feed" the inexpressibly more effective word "glut," which gives at once the exhaustive sense of wealth belonging so often to Keats's poetry, and seems to match the full ecstasy of color and shape and fragrance that a morning rose may hold. Finally, in the line which originally stood, —

"Or on the rainbow of the dashing wave,"

he strikes out the rather trite epithet "dashing," and substitutes the stronger phrase "salt-sand wave," which is peculiar to him.

All these changes are happily accepted in the common editions of Keats; but these editions make two errors that are corrected by this manuscript, and should henceforth be abandoned. In the line usually printed, —

"Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be,"

the autograph text gives "or" in the place of the second "nor," a change consonant with the best usage; and in the line, —

"And hides the green hill in an April shroud,"

the middle word is clearly not "hill," but "hills." This is a distinct improvement, both because it broadens the landscape and because it averts the jangle of the closing *ll* with the final words "fall" and "all" in previous lines.

It is a fortunate thing that, in the uncertain destiny of all literary manuscripts, this characteristic document should have been preserved for us. It will be remembered that Keats himself once wrote in a letter that his fondest prayer, next to that for the health of his brother Tom, would be that some child of his brother George "should be the first American poet." This letter, printed by Milnes, was written October 29, 1818. George Keats died about 1851, and his youngest daughter, Isabel, who was thought greatly to resemble her uncle

John, both in looks and genius, died sadly at the age of seventeen. It is pleasant to think that we have, through the care exercised by this American brother, an opportunity of coming into close touch with the mental processes of that rare genius which first imparted something like actual color to English words. To be brought thus near to Keats suggests that poem by Browning where he speaks of a moment's interview with one who had seen Shelley, and compares it to picking up an eagle's feather on a lonely heath.

# IV

# MASSASOIT, INDIAN CHIEF

# MASSASOIT, INDIAN CHIEF

THERE was paid on October 19, 1907, one of the few tributes ever openly rendered by the white races to the higher type of native Indian leaders. Such was that given by a large company at Warren, Rhode Island, to Massasoit, the friendly Indian Sachem who had first greeted the early Pilgrims, on their arrival at Plymouth in 1620. The leading address was made by the author of this volume.

The newspaper correspondents tell us that, when an inquiry was one day made among visitors returning from the recent Jamestown Exposition, as to the things seen by each of them which he or she would remember longest, one man replied, "That life-size group in the Smithsonian building which shows John Smith in his old cock-boat trading with the Indians. He is giving them beads or something and getting baskets of corn in exchange."[1] This seemed to the speaker, and quite reasonably, the very first contact with civilization on the part of the American Indians. Precisely parallel to this is the memorial which we meet to dedicate, and which records the first interview in 1620 between the little group of Plymouth Pilgrims and Massasoit, known as the "greatest commander of the country," and "Sachem

[1] *Outlook*, October, 1907.

of the whole region north of Narragansett Bay."[1]

"Heaven from all creatures hides the book of fate," says the poet Pope; and nothing is more remarkable in human history than the way in which great events sometimes reach their climax at once, instead of gradually working up to it. Never was this better illustrated than when the Plymouth Pilgrims first met the one man of this region who could guarantee them peace for fifty years, and did so. The circumstances seem the simplest of the simple.

The first hasty glance between the Plymouth Puritans and the Indians did not take place, as you will recall, until the newcomers had been four days on shore, when, in the words of the old chronicler, "they espied five or sixe people with a Dogge coming towards them, who were savages: who when they saw them ran into the Woods and whistled the Dogge after them." (This quadruped, whether large or small, had always a capital letter in his name, while human savages had none, in these early narratives.) When the English pursued the Indians, "they ran away might and main."[2] The next interview was a stormier one; four days later, those same Pilgrims were asleep on board the

[1] Bancroft's *History of the United States*, i, 247.

[2] E. W. Pierce's *Indian Biography*.

"shallope" on the morning of December 8, 1620 (now December 19), when they heard "a great and strange cry," and arrow-shots came flying amongst them which they returned and one Indian "gave an extraordinary cry" and away they went. After all was quiet, the Pilgrims picked up eighteen arrows, some "headed with brass, some with hart's horn" (deer's horn), "and others with eagles' claws," [1] the brass heads at least showing that those Indians had met Englishmen before.

Three days after this encounter at Namskeket, — namely, on December 22, 1620 (a date now computed as December 23), — the English landed at Patuxet, now Plymouth. (I know these particulars as to dates, because I was myself born on the anniversary of this first date, the 22d, and regarded myself as a sort of brevet Pilgrim, until men, alleged to be scientific, robbed me of one point of eminence in my life by landing the Pilgrims on the 23d). Three months passed before the sight of any more Indians, when Samoset came, all alone, with his delightful salutation, "Welcome, Englishmen," and a few days later (March 22, 1621), the great chief of all that region, Massasoit, appeared on the scene.

When he first made himself visible, with

[1] Young's *Chronicles of the Pilgrims*, 158.

sixty men, on that day, upon what is still known as Strawberry Hill, he asked that somebody be sent to hold a parley with him. Edmund Winslow was appointed to this office, and went forward protected only by his sword and armor, and carrying presents to the Sachem. Winslow also made a speech of some length, bringing messages (quite imaginary, perhaps, and probably not at all comprehended) from King James, whose representative, the governor, wished particularly to see Massasoit. It appears from the record, written apparently by Winslow himself, that Massasoit made no particular reply to this harangue, but paid very particular attention to Winslow's sword and armor, and proposed at once to begin business by buying them. This, however, was refused, but Winslow induced Massasoit to cross a brook between the English and himself, taking with him twenty of his Indians, who were bidden to leave their bows and arrows behind them. Beyond the brook, he was met by Captain Standish, with an escort of six armed men, who exchanged salutations and attended him to one of the best, but unfinished, houses in the village. Here a green rug was spread on the floor and three or four cushions. The governor, Bradford, then entered the house, followed by three or four soldiers and preceded by a flourish

from a drum and trumpet, which quite delighted and astonished the Indians. It was a deference paid to their Sachem. He and the governor then kissed each other, as it is recorded, sat down together, and regaled themselves with an entertainment. The feast is recorded by the early narrator as consisting chiefly of strong waters, a "thing the savages love very well," it is said; "and the Sachem took such a large draught of it at once as made him sweat all the time he staied."[1]

A substantial treaty of peace was made on this occasion, one immortalized by the fact that it was the first made with the Indians of New England. It is the unquestioned testimony of history that the negotiation was remembered and followed by both sides for half a century: nor was Massasoit, or any of the Wampanoags during his lifetime, convicted of having violated or having attempted to violate any of its provisions. This was a great achievement! Do you ask what price bought all this? The price practically paid for all the vast domain and power granted to the white man consisted of the following items: "a pair of knives and a copper chain with a jewel in it, for the grand Sachem; and for his brother Quadequina, a knife, a jewel to hang in his ear, a pot of strong

[1] Thatcher's *Lives of Indians*, i, 119.

waters, a good quantity of biscuit and a piece of butter."[1]

Fair words, the proverb says, butter no parsnips, but the fair words of the white men had provided the opportunity for performing that process. The description preserved of the Indian chief by an eye-witness is as follows: "In his person he is a very lusty man in his best years, an able body, grave of countenance and spare of speech; in his attire little or nothing differing from the rest of his followers, only in a great chain of white bone beads about his neck; and at it, behind his neck, hangs a little bag of tobacco, which he drank, and gave us to drink (this being the phrase for that indulgence in those days, as is found in Ben Jonson and other authors). His face was painted with a sad red, like murrey (so called from the color of the Moors) and oiled, both head and face, that he looked greasily. All his followers likewise were in their faces, in part or in whole painted, some black, some red, some yellow, and some white, some with crosses and other antic works; some had skins on them and some naked: all strong, tall men in appearance."[2]

All this which Dr. Young tells us would have been a good description of an Indian party under

[1] Thatcher's *Lives of Indians*, i, 120.

[2] Young's *Chronicles of the Pilgrims*, 194.

Black Hawk, which was presented to the President at Washington as late as 1837; and also, I can say the same of such a party seen by myself, coming from a prairie in Kansas, then unexplored, in 1856.

The interchange of eatables was evidently at that period a pledge of good feeling, as it is to-day. On a later occasion, Captain Standish, with Isaac Alderton, went to visit the Indians, who gave them three or four groundnuts and some tobacco. The writer afterwards says: "Our governor bid them send the king's kettle and filled it full of pease which pleased them well, and so they went their way." It strikes the modern reader as if this were to make pease and peace practically equivalent, and as if the parties needed only a pun to make friends. It is doubtful whether the arrival of a conquering race was ever in the history of the world marked by a treaty so simple and therefore noble.

"This treaty with Massasoit," says Belknap, "was the work of one day," and being honestly intended on both sides, was kept with fidelity as long as Massasoit lived.[1] In September, 1639, Massasoit and his oldest son, Mooanam, afterwards called Wamsutta, came into the court at Plymouth and desired that this ancient league should remain inviolable, which was accordingly

[1] Belknap's *American Biography*, ii, 214.

ratified and confirmed by the government,[1] and lasted until it was broken by Philip, the successor of Wamsutta, in 1675. It is not my affair to discuss the later career of Philip, whose insurrection is now viewed more leniently than in its own day; but the spirit of it was surely quite mercilessly characterized by a Puritan minister, Increase Mather, who, when describing a battle in which old Indian men and women, the wounded and the helpless, were burned alive, said proudly, "This day we brought five hundred Indian souls to hell."[2]

But the end of all was approaching. In 1623, Massasoit sent a messenger to Plymouth to say that he was ill, and Governor Bradford sent Mr. Winslow to him with medicines and cordials. When they reached a certain ferry, upon Winslow's discharging his gun, Indians came to him from a house not far off who told him that Massasoit was dead and that day buried. As they came nearer, at about half an hour before the setting of the sun, another messenger came and told them that he was not dead, though there was no hope that they would find him living. Hastening on, they arrived late at night.

"When we came thither," Winslow writes, "we found the house so full of men as we could

[1] Young's *Chronicles of the Pilgrims*, 194, note.

[2] E. W. Pierce's *Indian Biography*, 22.

scarce get in, though they used their best diligence to make way for us. There were they in the midst of their charms for him, making such a hellish noise as it distempered us that were well, and therefore unlike to ease him that was sick. About him were six or eight women, who chafed his arms, legs and thighs to keep heat in him. When they had made an end of their charming, one told him that his friends, the English, were come to see him. Having understanding left, but his sight was wholly gone, he asked who was come. They told him Winsnow, for they cannot pronounce the letter *l*, but ordinarily *n* in place thereof. He desired to speak with me. When I came to him and they told him of it, he put forth his hand to me, which I took. When he said twice, though very inwardly: 'Keen Winsnow?' which is to say 'Art thou Winslow?' I answered: 'Ahhe'; that is, 'Yes.' Then he doubled these words: 'Matta neen wonckanet nanem, Winsnow!' That is to say: 'Oh, Winslow, I shall never see thee again!' Then I called Hobbamock and desired him to tell Massasowat that the governor, hearing of his sickness, was sorry for the same; and though by many businesses he could not come himself, yet he sent me with such things for him as he thought most likely to do good in this extremity; and whereof if he pleased to take, I

would presently give him; which he desired, and having a confection of many comfortable conserves on the point of my knife, I gave him some, which I could scarce get through his teeth. When it was dissolved in his mouth, he swallowed the juice of it; whereat those that were about him much rejoiced, saying that he had not swallowed anything in two days before."[1]

Then Winslow tells how he nursed the sick chief, sending messengers back to the governor for a bottle of drink, and some chickens from which to make a broth for his patient. Meanwhile he dissolved some of the confection in water and gave it to Massasoit to drink; within half an hour the Indian improved. Before the messengers could return with the chickens, Winslow made a broth of meal and strawberry-leaves and sassafras-root, which he strained through his handkerchief and gave the chief, who drank at least a pint of it. After this his sight mended more and more, and all rejoiced that the Englishman had been the means of preserving the life of Massasoit. At length the messengers returned with the chickens, but Massasoit, "finding his stomach come to him, . . . would not have the chickens killed, but kept them for breed."

[1] E. W. Pierce's *Indian Biography*, 25.

From far and near his followers came to see their restored chief, who feelingly said: "Now I see the English are my friends and love me; and whilst I live I will never forget this kindness they have showed me."

It would be interesting, were I to take the time, to look into the relations of Massasoit with others, especially with Roger Williams; but this has been done by others, particularly in the somewhat imaginative chapter of my old friend, Mr. Butterworth, and I have already said enough. Nor can I paint the background of that strange early society of Rhode Island, its reaction from the stern Massachusetts rigor, and its quaint and varied materials. In that new state, as Bancroft keenly said, there were settlements "filled with the strangest and most incongruous elements . . . so that if a man had lost his religious opinions, he might have been sure to find them again in some village in Rhode Island."

Meanwhile "the old benevolent sachem, Massasoit," says Drake's "Book of the Indians," "having died in the winter of 1661–2," so died, a few months after, his oldest son, Alexander. Then came by regular succession, Philip, the next brother, of whom the historian Hubbard says that for his "ambitious and haughty spirit he was nicknamed 'King Philip.'" From

this time followed warlike dismay in the colonies, ending in Philip's piteous death.

As a long-deferred memorial to Massasoit with all his simple and modest virtues, a tablet has now been reverently dedicated, in the presence of two of the three surviving descendants of the Indian chief, one of these wearing his ancestral robes. The dedication might well close as it did with the noble words of Young's "Night Thoughts," suited to such an occasion: —

> "Each man makes his own stature, builds himself:
> Virtue alone outbuilds the Pyramids;
> Her monuments shall last when Egypt's fall."

# V

# JAMES FENIMORE COOPER

# JAMES FENIMORE COOPER

"Cooper, whose name is with his country's woven
First in her ranks; her Pioneer of mind."

These were the words in which Fitz-Greene Halleck designated Cooper's substantial precedence in American novel-writing. Apart from this mere priority in time,—he was born at Burlington, New Jersey, September 15, 1789, and died at Cooperstown, New York, September 14, 1851,—he rendered the unique service of inaugurating three especial classes of fiction,—the novel of the American Revolution, the Indian novel, and the sea novel. In each case he wrote primarily for his own fellow countrymen, and achieved fame first at their hands; and in each he produced a class of works which, in spite of their own faults and of the somewhat unconciliatory spirit of their writer, have secured a permanence and a breadth of range unequaled in English prose fiction, save by Scott alone. To-day the sale of his works in his own language remains unabated; and one has only to look over the catalogues of European booksellers in order to satisfy himself that this popularity continues, undiminished, through the medium of translation.

It may be safely said of him that no author of fiction in the English language, except Scott, has held his own so well for half a century after death. Indeed, the list of various editions and versions of his writings in the catalogues of German booksellers often exceeds that of Scott. This is not in the slightest degree due to his personal qualities, for these made him unpopular, nor to personal manœuvring, for this he disdained. He was known to refuse to have his works even noticed in a newspaper for which he wrote, the "New York Patriot." He never would have consented to review his own books, as both Scott and Irving did, or to write direct or indirect puffs of himself, as was done by Poe and Whitman. He was foolishly sensitive to criticism, and unable to conceal it; he was easily provoked to a quarrel; he was dissatisfied with either praise or blame, and speaks evidently of himself in the words of the hero of "Miles Wallingford," when he says: "In scarce a circumstance of my life that has brought me in the least under the cognizance of the public have I ever been judged justly." There is no doubt that he himself — or rather the temperament given him by nature — was to blame for this, but the fact is unquestionable.

Add to this that he was, in his way and in what was unfortunately the most obnoxious way, a

reformer. That is, he was what may be called a reformer in the conservative direction, — he belabored his fellow citizens for changing many English ways and usages, and he wished them to change these things back again, immediately. In all this he was absolutely unselfish, but utterly tactless; and inasmuch as the point of view he took was one requiring the very greatest tact, the defect was hopeless. As a rule, no man criticises American ways so unsuccessfully as an American who has lived many years in Europe. The mere European critic is ignorant of our ways and frankly owns it, even if thinking the fact but a small disqualification; while the American absentee, having remained away long enough to have forgotten many things and never to have seen many others, may have dropped hopelessly behindhand as to the facts, yet claims to speak with authority. Cooper went even beyond these professional absentees, because, while they are usually ready to praise other countries at the expense of America, Cooper, with heroic impartiality, dispraised all countries, or at least all that spoke English. A thoroughly patriotic and high-minded man, he yet had no mental perspective, and made small matters as important as great. Constantly reproaching America for not being Europe, he also satirized Europe for being what it was.

As a result, he was for a time equally detested by the press of both countries. The English, he thought, had "a national propensity to blackguardism," and certainly the remarks he drew from them did something to vindicate the charge. When the London "Times" called him "affected, offensive, curious, and ill-conditioned," and "Fraser's Magazine," "a liar, a bilious braggart, a full jackass, an insect, a grub, and a reptile," they clearly left little for America to say in that direction. Yet Park Benjamin did his best, or his worst, when he called Cooper (in Greeley's "New Yorker") "a superlative dolt and the common mark of scorn and contempt of every well-informed American"; and so did Webb, when he pronounced the novelist "a base-minded caitiff who had traduced his country." Not being able to reach his English opponents, Cooper turned on these Americans, and spent years in attacking Webb and others through the courts, gaining little and losing much through the long vicissitudes of petty local lawsuits. The fact has kept alive their memory; but for Lowell's keener shaft, "Cooper has written six volumes to show he's as good as a lord," there was no redress. The arrow lodged and split the target.

Like Scott and most other novelists, Cooper was rarely successful with his main characters,

but was saved by his subordinate ones. These were strong, fresh, characteristic, human; and they lay, as I have already said, in several different directions, all equally marked. If he did not create permanent types in Harvey Birch the spy, Leather-Stocking the woodsman, Long Tom Coffin the sailor, Chingachgook the Indian, then there is no such thing as the creation of characters in literature. Scott was far more profuse and varied, but he gave no more of life to individual personages, and perhaps created no types so universally recognized. What is most remarkable is that, in the case of the Indian especially, Cooper was not only in advance of the knowledge of his own time, but of that of the authors who immediately followed him. In Parkman and Palfrey, for instance, the Indian of Cooper vanishes and seems wholly extinguished; but under the closer inspection of Alice Fletcher and Horatio Hale, the lost figure reappears, and becomes more picturesque, more poetic, more thoughtful, than even Cooper dared to make him. The instinct of the novelist turned out more authoritative than the premature conclusions of a generation of historians.

It is only women who can draw the commonplace, at least in English, and make it fascinating. Perhaps only two English women have done this, Jane Austen and George Eliot; while

in France George Sand has certainly done it far less well than it has been achieved by Balzac and Daudet. Cooper never succeeded in it for a single instant, and even when he has an admiral of this type to write about, he puts into him less of life than Marryat imparts to the most ordinary midshipman. The talk of Cooper's civilian worthies is, as Professor Lounsbury has well said, — in what is perhaps the best biography yet written of any American author, — "of a kind not known to human society." This is doubtless aggravated by the frequent use of *thee* and *thou*, yet this, which Professor Lounsbury attributes to Cooper's Quaker ancestry, was in truth a part of the formality of the old period, and is found also in Brockden Brown. And as his writings conform to their period in this, so they did in other respects : describing every woman, for instance, as a "female," and making her to be such as Cooper himself describes the heroine of "Mercedes of Castile" to be when he says, "Her very nature is made up of religion and female decorum." Scott himself could also draw such inane figures, yet in Jeanie Deans he makes an average Scotch woman heroic, and in Meg Merrilies and Madge Wildfire he paints the extreme of daring self-will. There is scarcely a novel of Scott's where some woman does not show qualities which

approach the heroic; while Cooper scarcely produced one where a woman rises even to the level of an interesting commonplaceness. She may be threatened, endangered, tormented, besieged in forts, captured by Indians, but the same monotony prevails. So far as the real interest of Cooper's story goes, it might usually be destitute of a single "female," that sex appearing chiefly as a bundle of dry goods to be transported, or as a fainting appendage to the skirmish. The author might as well have written the romance of an express parcel.

His long introductions he shared with the other novelists of the day, or at least with Scott, for both Miss Austen and Miss Edgeworth are more modern in this respect and strike more promptly into the tale. His loose-jointed plots are also shared with Scott, but Cooper knows as surely as his rival how to hold the reader's attention when once grasped. Like Scott's, too, is his fearlessness in giving details, instead of the vague generalizations which were then in fashion, and to which his academical critics would have confined him. He is indeed already vindicated in some respects by the advance of the art he pursued; where he led the way, the best literary practice has followed. The "Edinburgh Review" exhausted its heavy artillery upon him for his accurate descriptions of costume and

localities, and declared that they were "an epilepsy of the fancy," and that a vague general account would have been far better. "Why describe the dress and appearance of an Indian chief, down to his tobacco-stopper and button-holes?" We now see that it is this very habit which has made Cooper's Indian a permanent figure in literature, while the Indians of his predecessor, Charles Brockden Brown, were merely dusky spectres. "Poetry or romance," continued the "Edinburgh Review," "does not descend into the particulars," this being the same fallacy satirized by Ruskin, whose imaginary painter produced a quadruped which was a generalization between a pony and a pig. Balzac, who risked the details of buttons and tobacco pipes as fearlessly as Cooper, said of "The Pathfinder," "Never did the art of writing tread closer upon the art of the pencil. This is the school of study for literary landscape painters." He says elsewhere: "If Cooper had succeeded in the painting of character to the same extent that he did in the painting of the phenomena of nature, he would have uttered the last word of our art." Upon such praise as this the reputation of James Fenimore Cooper may well rest.

# VI

# CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN

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WHEN, in 1834, the historian Jared Sparks undertook the publication of a "Library of American Biography," he included in the very first volume — with a literary instinct most creditable to one so absorbed in the severer paths of history — a memoir of Charles Brockden Brown by W. H. Prescott. It was an appropriate tribute to the first imaginative writer worth mentioning in America, — he having been born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on January 17, 1771, and died there of consumption on February 22, 1810, — and to one who was our first professional author. He was also the first to exert a positive influence, across the Atlantic, upon British literature, laying thus early a few modest strands towards an ocean-cable of thought. As a result of this influence, concealed doors opened in lonely houses, fatal epidemics laid cities desolate, secret plots were organized, unknown persons from foreign lands died in garrets, usually leaving large sums of money; the honor of innocent women was constantly endangered, though usually saved in time; people were subject to somnambulism and

general frenzy; vast conspiracies were organized with small aims and smaller results. His books, published between 1798 and 1801, made their way across the ocean with a promptness that now seems inexplicable; and Mrs. Shelley, in her novel of "The Last Man," founds her whole description of an epidemic which nearly destroyed the human race, on "the masterly delineations of the author of 'Arthur Mervyn.'"

Shelley himself recognized his obligations to Brown; and it is to be remembered that Brown himself was evidently familiar with Godwin's philosophical writings, and that he may have drawn from those of Mary Wollstonecraft his advanced views as to the rights and education of women, a subject on which his first book, "Alcuin," offered the earliest American protest. Undoubtedly his books furnished a point of transition from Mrs. Radcliffe, of whom he disapproved, to the modern novel of realism, although his immediate influence and, so to speak, his stage properties, can hardly be traced later than the remarkable tale, also by a Philadelphian, called "Stanley; or the Man of the World," first published in 1839 in London, though the scene was laid in America. This book was attributed, from its profuse literary quotations, to Edward Everett, but was soon understood to be the work of a very young man of twenty-one, Horace

Binney Wallace. In this book the influence of Bulwer and Disraeli is palpable, but Brown's concealed chambers and aimless conspiracies and sudden mysterious deaths also reappear in full force, not without some lingering power, and then vanish from American literature forever.

Brown's style, and especially the language put by him into the mouths of his characters, is perhaps unduly characterized by Professor Woodberry as being "something never heard off the stage of melodrama." What this able critic does not sufficiently recognize is that the general style of the period at which they were written was itself melodramatic; and that to substitute what we should call simplicity would then have made the picture unfaithful. One has only to read over the private letters of any educated family of that period to see that people did not then express themselves as they now do; that they were far more ornate in utterance, more involved in statement, more impassioned in speech. Even a comparatively terse writer like Prescott, in composing Brown's biography only sixty years ago, shows traces of the earlier period. Instead of stating simply that his hero was a born Quaker, he says of him: "He was descended from a highly respectable family, whose parents were of that estimable sect who came over with William Penn, to seek an asy-

lum where they might worship their Creator unmolested, in the meek and humble spirit of their own faith." Prescott justly criticises Brown for saying, "I was *fraught with the apprehension* that my life was endangered"; or "his brain seemed to swell beyond its *continent*"; or "I drew every bolt that *appended* to it"; or "on recovering from *deliquium*, you found it where it had been dropped"; or for resorting to the circumlocution of saying, "by a common apparatus that lay beside my head I could produce a light," when he really meant that he had a tinder-box. The criticism on Brown is fair enough, yet Prescott himself presently takes us halfway back to the florid vocabulary of that period, when, instead of merely saying that his hero was fond of reading, he tells us that "from his earliest childhood Brown gave evidence of studious propensities, being frequently noticed by his father on his return from school poring over some heavy tome." If the tome in question was Johnson's dictionary, as it may have been, it would explain both Brown's style of writing and the milder amplifications of his biographer. Nothing is more difficult to tell, in the fictitious literature of even a generation or two ago, where a faithful delineation ends and where caricature begins. The four-story signatures of Micawber's letters, as represented by

Dickens, go but little beyond the similar courtesies employed in a gentlewoman's letters in the days of Anna Seward. All we can say is that within a century, for some cause or other, English speech has grown very much simpler, and human happiness has increased in proportion.

In the preface to his second novel, "Edgar Huntley," Brown announces it as his primary purpose to be American in theme, "to exhibit a series of adventures growing out of our own country," adding, "That the field of investigation opened to us by our own country should differ essentially from those which exist in Europe may be readily conceived." He protests against "puerile superstition and exploded manners, Gothic castles and chimeras," and adds: "The incidents of Indian hostility and the perils of the western wilderness are far more suitable." All this is admirable, but unfortunately the inherited thoughts and methods of the period hung round him to cloy his style, even after his aim was emancipated. It is to be remembered that almost all his imaginative work was done in early life, before the age of thirty, and before his powers became mature. Yet with all his drawbacks he had achieved his end, and had laid the foundation for American fiction.

With all his inflation of style, he was undoubtedly, in his way, a careful observer. The proof of this is that he has preserved for us many minor points of life and manners which make the Philadelphia of a century ago now more familiar to us than is any other American city of that period. He gives us the roving Indian; the newly arrived French musician with violin and monkey; the one-story farmhouses, where boarders are entertained at a dollar a week; the gray cougar amid caves of limestone. We learn from him "the dangers and toils of a midnight journey in a stage coach in America. The roads are knee deep in mire, winding through crags and pits, while the wheels groan and totter and the curtain and roof admit the wet at a thousand seams." We learn the proper costume for a youth of good fortune and family, — "nankeen coat striped with green, a white silk waistcoat elegantly needle-wrought, cassimere pantaloons, stockings of variegated silk, and shoes that in their softness vie with satin." When dressing himself, this favored youth ties his flowing locks with a black ribbon. We find from him that "stage boats" then crossed twice a day from New York to Staten Island, and we discover also with some surprise that negroes were freely admitted to ride in stages in Pennsylvania,

although they were liable, half a century later, to be ejected from street-cars. We learn also that there were negro free schools in Philadelphia. All this was before 1801.

It has been common to say that Brown had no literary skill, but it would be truer to say that he had no sense of literary construction. So far as skill is tested by the power to pique curiosity, Brown had it; his chapters almost always end at a point of especial interest, and the next chapter, postponing the solution, often diverts the interest in a wholly new direction. But literary structure there is none: the plots are always cumulative and even oppressive; narrative is inclosed in narrative; new characters and complications come and go, while important personages disappear altogether, and are perhaps fished up with difficulty, as with a hook and line, on the very last page. There is also a total lack of humor, and only such efforts at vivacity as this: "Move on, my quill! wait not for my guidance. Reanimated with thy master's spirit, all airy light. A heyday rapture! A mounting impulse sways him; lifts him from the earth." There is so much of monotony in the general method, that one novel seems to stand for all; and the same modes of solution reappear so often, — somnambulism,

ventriloquism, yellow fever, forged letters, concealed money, secret closets, — that it not only gives a sense of puerility, but makes it very difficult to recall, as to any particular passage, from which book it came.

# VII

# HENRY DAVID THOREAU

# HENRY DAVID THOREAU

THERE has been in America no such instance of posthumous reputation as in the case of Thoreau. Poe and Whitman may be claimed as parallels, but not justly. Poe, even during his life, rode often on the very wave of success, until it subsided presently beneath him, always to rise again, had he but made it possible. Whitman gathered almost immediately a small but stanch band of followers, who have held by him with such vehemence and such flagrant imitation as to keep his name defiantly in evidence, while perhaps enhancing the antagonism of his critics. Thoreau could be egotistical enough, but was always high-minded; all was open and aboveboard; one could as soon conceive of self-advertising by a deer in the woods or an otter of the brook. He had no organized clique of admirers, nor did he possess even what is called personal charm, — or at least only that piquant attraction which he himself found in wild apples. As a rule, he kept men at a distance, being busy with his own affairs. He left neither wife nor children to attend to his memory; and his sister seemed for a time to repress

the publication of his manuscripts. Yet this plain, shy, retired student, who when thirty-two years old carried the unsold edition of his first book upon his back to his attic chamber; who died at forty-four still unknown to the general public; this child of obscurity, who printed but two volumes during his lifetime, has had ten volumes of his writings published by others since his death, while four biographies of him have been issued in America (by Emerson, Channing, Sanborn, and Jones), besides two in England (by Page and Salt).

Thoreau was born on July 12, 1817, in Concord, Massachusetts. There he spent the greater part of his life, taught school, and was for three years an inmate of the family of Ralph Waldo Emerson, practicing at various times the art of pencil-making — his father's occupation — and also of surveying, carpentering, and housekeeping. So identified was he with the place that Emerson speaks of it in one case as Thoreau's "native town." Yet from that very familiarity, perhaps, the latter was underestimated by many of his neighbors, as was the case in Edinburgh with Sir Walter Scott, as Mrs. Grant of Laggan describes.

When I was endeavoring, about 1870, to persuade Thoreau's sister to let some one edit his journals, I invoked the aid of Judge Hoar, then

lord of the manor in Concord, who heard me patiently through, and then said: "Whereunto? You have not established the preliminary point. Why should any one wish to have Thoreau's journals printed?" Ten years later, four successive volumes were made out of these journals by the late H. G. O. Blake, and it became a question if the whole might not be published. I hear from a local photograph dealer in Concord that the demand for Thoreau's pictures now exceeds that for any other local celebrity. In the last sale catalogue of autographs which I have encountered, I find a letter from Thoreau priced at $17.50, one from Hawthorne valued at the same, one from Longfellow at $4.50 only, and one from Holmes at $3, each of these being guaranteed as an especially good autograph letter. Now the value of such memorials during a man's life affords but a slight test of his permanent standing, — since almost any man's autograph can be obtained for two postage-stamps if the request be put with sufficient ingenuity; — but when this financial standard can be safely applied more than thirty years after a man's death, it comes pretty near to a permanent fame.

It is true that Thoreau had Emerson as the editor of four of his posthumous volumes; but it is also true that he had against him the vehe-

ment voice of Lowell, whose influence as a critic was at that time greater than Emerson's. It will always remain a puzzle why it was that Lowell, who had reviewed Thoreau's first book with cordiality in the "Massachusetts Quarterly Review," and had said to me afterwards, on hearing him compared to Izaak Walton, "There is room for three or four Waltons in Thoreau," should have written the really harsh attack on the latter which afterwards appeared, and in which the plain facts were unquestionably perverted. To transform Thoreau's two brief years of study and observation at Walden, within two miles of his mother's door, into a life-long renunciation of his fellow men; to complain of him as waiving all interest in public affairs when the great crisis of John Brown's execution had found him far more awake to it than Lowell was, — this was only explainable by the lingering tradition of that savage period of criticism, initiated by Poe, in whose hands the thing became a tomahawk. As a matter of fact, the tomahawk had in this case its immediate effect; and the English editor and biographer of Thoreau has stated that Lowell's criticism is to this day the great obstacle to the acceptance of Thoreau's writings in England. It is to be remembered, however, that Thoreau was not wholly of English but partly of French origin, and was, it might

be added, of a sort of moral-Oriental, or Puritan Pagan temperament. With a literary feeling even stronger than his feeling for nature, — the proof of this being that he could not, like many men, enjoy nature in silence, — he put his observations always on the level of literature, while Mr. Burroughs, for instance, remains more upon the level of journalism. It is to be doubted whether any author under such circumstances would have been received favorably in England; just as the poems of Emily Dickinson, which have shafts of profound scrutiny that often suggest Thoreau, had an extraordinary success at home, but fell hopelessly dead in England, so that the second volume was never even published.

Lowell speaks of Thoreau as "indolent"; but this is, as has been said, like speaking of the indolence of a self-registering thermometer. Lowell objects to him as pursuing "a seclusion that keeps him in the public eye"; whereas it was the public eye which sought him; it was almost as hard to persuade him to lecture (*crede experto*) as it was to get an audience for him when he had consented. He never proclaimed the intrinsic superiority of the wilderness, as has been charged, but pointed out better than any one else has done its undesirableness as a residence, ranking it only as "a resource and

a background." "The partially cultivated country it is," he says, "which has chiefly inspired, and will continue to inspire, the strains of poets such as compose the mass of any literature." "What is nature," he elsewhere says, "unless there is a human life passing within it? Many joys and many sorrows are the lights and shadows in which she shines most beautiful." This is the real and human Thoreau, who often whimsically veiled himself, but was plainly enough seen by any careful observer. That he was abrupt and repressive to bores and pedants, that he grudged his time to them and frequently withdrew himself, was as true of him as of Wordsworth or Tennyson. If they were allowed their privacy, though in the heart of England, an American who never left his own broad continent might at least be allowed his privilege of stepping out of doors. The Concord schoolchildren never quarreled with this habit, for he took them out of doors with him and taught them where the best whortleberries grew.

His scholarship, like his observation of nature, was secondary to his function as poet and writer. Into both he carried the element of whim; but his version of the "Prometheus Bound" shows accuracy, and his study of birds and plants shows care. It must be remembered that he antedated the modern school, classed

plants by the Linnæan system, and had necessarily Nuttall for his elementary manual of birds. Like all observers, he left whole realms uncultivated; thus he puzzles in his journal over the great brown paper cocoon of the *Attacus Cecropia*, which every village boy brings home from the winter meadows. If he has not the specialized habit of the naturalist of to-day, neither has he the polemic habit; firm beyond yielding, as to the local facts of his own Concord, he never quarrels with those who have made other observations elsewhere; he is involved in none of those contests in which palæontologists, biologists, astronomers, have wasted so much of their lives.

His especial greatness is that he gives us standing-ground below the surface, a basis not to be washed away. A hundred sentences might be quoted from him which make common observers seem superficial and professed philosophers trivial, but which, if accepted, place the realities of life beyond the reach of danger. He was a spiritual ascetic, to whom the simplicity of nature was luxury enough; and this, in an age of growing expenditure, gave him an unspeakable value. To him, life itself was a source of joy so great that it was only weakened by diluting it with meaner joys. This was the standard to which he constantly held his con-

temporaries. "There is nowhere recorded," he complains, "a simple and irrepressible satisfaction with the gift of life, any memorable praise of God. . . . If the day and the night are such that you greet them with joy, and life emits a fragrance, like flowers and sweet-scented herbs, — is more elastic, starry, and immortal, — that is your success." This was Thoreau, who died unmarried at Concord, Massachusetts, May 6, 1862.

# VIII

## EMERSON'S "FOOT-NOTE PERSON," — ALCOTT

# EMERSON'S "FOOT-NOTE PERSON,"—ALCOTT

THE phrase "foot-note person" was first introduced into our literature by one of the most acute and original of the anonymous writers in the "Atlantic Monthly" (July, 1906), one by whose consent I am permitted to borrow it for my present purpose. Its originator himself suggests, as an illustration of what he means, the close relation which existed through life between Ralph Waldo Emerson and his less famous Concord neighbor, Amos Bronson Alcott. The latter was doubtless regarded by the world at large as a mere "foot-note" to his famous friend, while he yet was doubtless the only literary contemporary to whom Emerson invariably and candidly deferred, regarding him, indeed, as unequivocally the leading philosophic or inspirational mind of his day. Let this "foot-note," then, be employed as the text for frank discussion of what was, perhaps, the most unique and picturesque personality developed during the Transcendental period of our American literature. Let us consider the career of one who was born with as little that seemed advan-

tageous in his surroundings as was the case with Abraham Lincoln, or John Brown of Ossawatomie, and who yet developed in the end an individuality as marked as that of Poe or Walt Whitman.

In looking back on the intellectual group of New England, eighty years ago, nothing is more noticeable than its birth in a circle already cultivated, at least according to the standard of its period. Emerson, Channing, Bryant, Longfellow, Hawthorne, Holmes, Lowell, even Whittier, were born into what were, for the time and after their own standard, cultivated families. They grew up with the protection and stimulus of parents and teachers; their early biographies offer nothing startling. Among them appeared, one day, this student and teacher, more serene, more absolutely individual, than any one of them. He had indeed, like every boy born in New England, some drop of academic blood within his traditions, but he was born in the house of his grandfather, a poor farmer in Wolcott, Connecticut, on November 29, 1799. He went to the most primitive of wayside schools, and was placed at fourteen as apprentice in a clock factory; was for a few years a traveling peddler, selling almanacs and trinkets; then wandered as far as North Carolina and Virginia in a similar traffic; then became

a half-proselyte among Quakers in North Carolina; then a school-teacher in Connecticut; always poor, but always thoughtful, ever gravitating towards refined society, and finally coming under the influence of that rare and high-minded man, the Rev. Samuel J. May, and placing himself at last in the still more favored position of Emerson's foot-note. When that took place, it suddenly made itself clear to the whole Concord circle that there was not one among them so serene, so equable, so dreamy, yet so constitutionally a leader, as this wandering child of the desert. Of all the men known in New England, he seemed the one least likely to have been a country peddler.

Mr. Alcott first visited Concord, as Mr. Cabot's memoir of Emerson tells us, in 1835, and in 1840 came there to live. But it was as early as May 19, 1837, that Emerson wrote to Margaret Fuller: "Mr. Alcott is the great man. His book ['Conversations on the Gospels'] does him no justice, and I do not like to see it. . . . But he has more of the Godlike than any man I have ever seen and his presence rebukes and threatens and raises. He *is* a teacher. . . . If he cannot make intelligent men feel the presence of a superior nature, the worse for them; I can never doubt him." [1] It is suggested by

[1] Sanborn and Harris's *Alcott*, ii, 566.

Dr. W. T. Harris, one of the two joint biographers of Alcott, that the description in the last chapter of Emerson's book styled "Nature," finished in August, 1836, was derived from a study of Mr. Alcott, and it is certain that there was no man among Emerson's contemporaries of whom thenceforward he spoke with such habitual deference. Courteous to all, it was to Alcott alone that he seemed to look up. Not merely Alcott's abstract statements, but his personal judgments, made an absolutely unique impression upon his more famous fellow townsman. It is interesting to notice that Alcott, while staying first in Concord, "complained of lack of simplicity in A——, B——, C——, and D—— (late visitors from the city)." Emerson said approvingly to his son: "Alcott is right touchstone to test them, litmus to detect the acid."[1] We cannot doubt that such a man's own judgment was absolutely simple; and such was clearly the opinion held by Emerson, who, indeed, always felt somewhat easier when he could keep Alcott at his elbow in Concord. Their mutual confidence reminds one of what was said long since by Dr. Samuel Johnson, that poetry was like brown bread: those who made it in their own houses never quite liked the taste of what they got elsewhere.

[1] *Emerson in Concord*, 120.

And from the very beginning, this attitude was reciprocated. At another time during that same early period (1837), Alcott, after criticising Emerson a little for "the picture of vulgar life that he draws with a Shakespearian boldness," closes with this fine tribute to the intrinsic qualities of his newly won friend: "Observe his style; it is full of genuine phrases from the Saxon. He loves the simple, the natural; the thing is sharply presented, yet graced by beauty and elegance. Our language is a fit organ, as used by him; and we hear classic English once more from northern lips. Shakespeare, Sidney, Browne, speak again to us, and we recognize our affinity with the fathers of English diction. Emerson is the only instance of original style among Americans. Who writes like him? Who can? None of his imitators, surely. The day shall come when this man's genius shall shine beyond the circle of his own city and nation. Emerson's is destined to be the high literary name of this age." [1]

No one up to that time, probably, had uttered an opinion of Emerson quite so prophetic as this; it was not until four years later, in 1841, that even Carlyle received the first volume of Emerson's "Essays" and said, "It is once more the voice of a man." Yet from that

[1] Sanborn and Harris's *Alcott*, i, 264.

moment Alcott and Emerson became united, however inadequate their twinship might have seemed to others. Literature sometimes, doubtless, makes strange friendships. There is a tradition that when Browning was once introduced to a new Chinese ambassador in London, the interpreter called attention to the fact that they were both poets. Upon Browning's courteously asking how much poetry His Excellency had thus far written, he replied, "Four volumes," and when asked what style of poetic art he cultivated, the answer was, "Chiefly the enigmatical." It is reported that Browning afterwards charitably or modestly added, "We felt doubly brothers after that." It may have been in a similar spirit that Emerson and his foot-note might seem at first to have united their destinies.

Emerson at that early period saw many defects in Alcott's style, even so far as to say that it often reminded him of that vulgar saying, "All stir and no go"; but twenty years later, in 1855, he magnificently vindicated the same style, then grown more cultivated and powerful, and, indeed, wrote thus of it: "I have been struck with the late superiority Alcott showed. His interlocutors were all better than he: he seemed childish and helpless, not apprehending or answering their remarks aright, and they masters of their

weapons. But by and by, when he got upon a thought, like an Indian seizing by the mane and mounting a wild horse of the desert, he overrode them all, and showed such mastery, and took up Time and Nature like a boy's marble in his hand, as to vindicate himself."[1]

A severe test of a man's depth of observation lies always in the analysis he gives of his neighbor's temperament; even granting this appreciation to be, as is sometimes fairly claimed, a woman's especial gift. It is a quality which certainly marked Alcott, who once said, for instance, of Emerson's combination of a clear voice with a slender chest, that "some of his organs were free, some fated." Indeed, his power in the graphic personal delineations of those about him was almost always visible, as where he called Garrison "a phrenological head illuminated," or said of Wendell Phillips, "Many are the friends of his golden tongue." This quality I never felt more, perhaps, than when he once said, when dining with me at the house of James T. Fields, in 1862, and speaking of a writer whom I thought I had reason to know pretty well: "He has a love of *wholeness;* in this respect far surpassing Emerson."

It is scarcely possible, for any one who recalls from his youth the antagonism and satire called

[1] Sanborn and Harris's *Alcott*, i, 262.

forth by Alcott's "sayings" in the early "Dial," to avoid astonishment at their more than contemptuous reception. Take, for example, in the very first number the fine saying on "Enthusiasm," thus: —

"Believe, youth, that your heart is an oracle; trust her instinctive auguries; obey her divine leadings; nor listen too fondly to the uncertain echoes of your head. The heart is the prophet of your soul, and ever fulfils her prophecies; reason is her historian; but for the prophecy, the history would not be. . . . Enthusiasm is the glory and hope of the world. It is the life of sanctity and genius; it has wrought all miracles since the beginning of time."

Or turn to the following (entitled: "IV. Immortality"): —

"The grander my conception of being, the nobler my future. There can be no sublimity of life without faith in the soul's eternity. Let me live superior to sense and custom, vigilant alway, and I shall experience my divinity; my hope will be infinite, nor shall the universe contain, or content me."

Or read this ("XII. Temptation"): —

"Greater is he who is above temptation, than he who, being tempted, overcomes. The latter but regains the state from which the former has not fallen. He who is tempted has sinned. Temptation is impossible to the holy."

Or this ("LXXXVIII. Renunciation"):—

"Renounce the world, yourself; and you shall possess the world, yourself, and God."

These are but fragments, here and there. For myself, I would gladly see these "Orphic Sayings" reprinted to-morrow, and watch the astonishment of men and women who vaguely recall the derision with which they were first greeted more than sixty years ago.

When it came to putting into action these high qualities, the stories relating to Mr. Alcott which seem most improbable are those which are unquestionably true, as is that of his way of dealing with a man in distress who came to beg of him the loan of five dollars. To this Alcott replied, after searching his pockets, that he had no such bank-note about him, but could lend him ten dollars. This offer was accepted, and Alcott did not even ask the borrower's name, and could merely endure the reproach or ridicule of his friends for six months; after which the same man appeared and paid back the money, offering interest, which was refused. The debtor turned out to be a well-known swindler, to whom this trusting generosity had made a novel and manly appeal.

Truth and honesty are apt to be classed in men's minds together, but the power of making money, or even of returning it when loaned, is

sometimes developed imperfectly among those who are in other respects wise and good. A curious illustration of this may be found in the published memoirs of Mr. Alcott (i, 349), but it is quite surpassed by the following narrative, hitherto unpublished, of a subsequent interview, even more picturesque, and apparently with the self-same creditor. I take it from his MS. Diary, where it appears with the formality of arrangement and beauty of handwriting which mark that extraordinary work.

(MAMMON)

*April*, 1839. Thursday, 18th. —

Things seem strange to me out there in Time and Space. I am not familiar with the order and usages of this realm. I am at home in the kingdom of the Soul alone.

This day, I passed along our great thoroughfare, gliding with Emerson's check in my pocket, into State Street; and stepped into one of Mammon's temples, for some of the world's coin, wherewith to supply bread for this body of mine, and those who depend upon me. But I felt dishonored by resorting to these haunts of Idolaters. I went not among them to dig in the mines of Lucre, nor to beg at the doors of the God. It was the hour for business on 'Change, which was swarming with worshippers. Bevies of devotees were consulting on appropriate rites whereby to honor their divinity.

One of these devotees (cousin-german of my wife) accosted me, as I was returning, and asked me to bring my oblation with the others. Now I owed the publican a round thousand, which he proffered me in days when his God prospered his wits; but I had nothing for him. That small pittance which I had just got snugly into my fob (thanks to my friend E———) was not for him, but for my wife's nurse, and came just in time to save my wife from distrusting utterly the succors of Providence. I told my man, that I had no money; but he might have me, if he wanted me. No: I was bad stock in the market; and so he bid me good-day. I left the buzz and hum of these devotees, who represent old Nature's relation to the Appetites and Senses, and returned, with a sense of grateful relief, from this sally into the Kingdom of Mammon, back to my domicile in the Soul.

There was, however, strangely developed in Alcott's later life an epoch of positively earning money. His first efforts at Western lectures began in the winter of 1853–54, and he returned in February, 1854. He was to give a series of talks on the representative minds of New England, with the circle of followers surrounding each; the subjects of his discourse being Webster, Greeley, Garrison, Margaret Fuller, Theodore Parker, Greenough, and Emerson; the separate themes being thus stated as seven, and the number of conversations as only six. Terms for the course

were three dollars. By his daughter Louisa's testimony he returned late at night with a single dollar in his pocket, this fact being thus explained in his own language: "Many promises were not kept and travelling is costly; but I have opened the way, and another year shall do better."[1] At any rate, his daughter thus pathetically described his appearance at this interview, as her mother wrote to a friend: "He looked as cold and thin as an icicle; but as serene as God."[2]

There is an almost dramatic interest in transferring our imaginations to the later visit he made westward, when he was eighty-one years old, between October, 1880, and May, 1881. He then traveled more than five thousand miles, lectured or held conversations at the rate of more than one a day, Sundays included, and came back with a thousand dollars, although more than half of his addresses had been gratuitous. For seven years after this he was the nominal dean of the so-called "School of Philosophy" in Concord, and for four years took an active part in its lectures and discussions. His last written works were most appropriately two sonnets on "Immortality," this being the only theme remaining inexhaustibly open.

Perhaps no two persons in the world were in

[1] Sanborn and Harris's *Alcott*, ii, 477.
[2] *Memoirs*, ii, 473.

their intellectual method more antipodal — to use one of Alcott's favorite phrases — than himself and Parker, though each stood near to Emerson and ostensibly belonged to the same body of thinkers. In debate, the mere presence of Parker made Alcott seem uneasy, as if yielding just cause for Emerson's searching inquiry, "Of what use is genius, if its focus be a little too short or too long?" No doubt, Mr. Alcott might well be one of those to whom such criticism could fitly be applied, just as it has been used to discourage the printing of Thoreau's whole journal. Is it not possible that Alcott's fame may yet be brought up gradually and securely, like Thoreau's, from those ample and beautifully written volumes which Alcott left behind him?

Alcott doubtless often erred, at first, in the direction of inflation in language. When the Town and Country Club was organized in Boston, and had been, indeed, established "largely to afford a dignified occupation for Alcott," as Emerson said, Alcott wished to have it christened either the Olympian Club or the Pan Club. Lowell, always quick at a joke, suggested the substitution of "Club of Hercules" instead of "Olympian"; or else that, inasmuch as the question of admitting women was yet undecided, "The Patty-Pan" would be a better name. But

if Alcott's words were large, he acted up to them. When the small assaulting party was driven back at the last moment from the Court House doors in Boston, during the Anthony Burns excitement, and the steps were left bare, the crowd standing back, it was Alcott who came forward and placidly said to the ring-leader, "Why are we not within?" On being told that the mob would not follow, he walked calmly up the steps, alone, cane in hand. When a revolver was fired from within, just as he had reached the highest step, and he discovered himself to be still unsupported, he as calmly turned and walked down without hastening a footstep. It was hard to see how Plato or Pythagoras could have done the thing better. Again, at the outbreak of the Civil War, when a project was formed for securing the defense of Washington by a sudden foray into Virginia, it appears from his Diary that he had been at the point of joining it, when it was superseded by the swift progress of events, and so abandoned.

The power of early sectarian training is apt to tell upon the later years even of an independent thinker, and so it was with Alcott. In his case a life-long ideal attitude passed back into something hard to distinguish from old-fashioned Calvinism. This was especially noticeable

at the evening receptions of the Rev. Joseph Cook, who flattered Alcott to the highest degree and was met at least halfway by the seer himself. Having been present at one or two of these receptions, I can testify to the disappointment inspired in Alcott's early friends at his seeming willingness to be made a hero in an attitude quite alien to that of his former self. The "New International," for instance, recognizes that "in later years his manner became more formal and his always nebulous teaching apparently more orthodox." Be this as it may, the man whom Emerson called "the most extraordinary man and highest genius of the time," and of whom he says, "As pure intellect I have never seen his equal," such a man needed only the fact of his unprotected footsteps under fire up the stairs of the Boston Court House to establish him in history as a truly all-round man,—unsurpassed among those of his own generation even in physical pluck.

# IX

# GEORGE BANCROFT

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GEORGE BANCROFT, who died in Washington, D. C., on January 17, 1891, was born at Worcester, Massachusetts, October 3, 1800, being the son of Aaron and Lucretia (Chandler) Bancroft. His first American ancestor in the male line was John Bancroft, who came to this country from England, arriving on June 12, 1632, and settling at Lynn, Massachusetts. There is no evidence of any especial literary or scholarly tastes in his early ancestors, although one at least among them became a subject for literature, being the hero of one of Cotton Mather's wonderful tales of recovery from smallpox. Samuel Bancroft, grandfather of the great historian, was a man in public station, and is described by Savage as "possessing the gift of utterance in an eminent degree"; and the historian's father, Rev. Aaron Bancroft, D. D., was a man of mark. He was born in 1755, fought at Lexington and Bunker Hill when almost a boy, was graduated at Harvard College in 1778, studied for the ministry, preached for a time in Nova Scotia, was settled at Worcester in 1788, and died there in 1839. He was a member of the American Academy

of Arts and Sciences, was an Arminian in theology, and in later life was President of the American Unitarian Association. He published various occasional sermons, a volume of doctrinal discourses, and (in 1807) a "Life of Washington," which was reprinted in England, and rivaled in circulation the larger work of Marshall, which appeared at about the same time. He thus bequeathed literary tastes to his thirteen children; and though only one of these reached public eminence, yet three of the daughters were prominent for many years in Worcester, being in charge of a school for girls, and highly esteemed; while another sister was well known in Massachusetts and at Washington as the wife of Governor (afterwards Senator) John Davis.

George Bancroft was fitted for college at Exeter Academy, where he was especially noted for his fine declamation. He entered Harvard College in 1813, taking his degree in 1817. He was the classmate of four men destined to be actively prominent in the great anti-slavery agitation a few years later, — Samuel J. May, Samuel E. Sewall, David Lee Child, and Robert F. Wallcut, — and of one prospective opponent of it, Caleb Cushing. Other men of note in the class were the Rev. Stephen H. Tyng, D. D., the Rev. Alva Woods, D. D., and Samuel A.

Eliot, afterwards Treasurer of the College and father of its recent President. Mr. Bancroft was younger than any of these, and very probably the youngest in his class, being less than seventeen at graduation. He was, however, second in rank, and it happened that Edward Everett, then recently appointed Professor of Greek Literature in that institution, had proposed that some young graduate of promise should be sent to Germany for purposes of study, that he might afterwards become one of the corps of Harvard instructors. Accordingly, Bancroft was selected, and went, in the early summer of 1818, to Göttingen. At that time the University had among its professors Eichhorn, Heeren, and Blumenbach. He also studied at Berlin, where he knew Schleiermacher, Savigny, and Wilhelm von Humboldt. At Jena he saw Goethe, and at Heidelberg studied under Schlosser. This last was in the spring of 1821, when he had already received his degree of Ph. D. at Göttingen and was making the tour of Europe. At Paris he met Cousin, Constant, and Alexander von Humboldt; he knew Manzoni at Milan, and Bunsen and Niebuhr at Rome. The very mention of these names seems to throw his early career far back into the past. Such experiences were far rarer then than now, and the return from them into what was the village-

like life of Harvard College was a far greater change. Yet he came back at last and discharged his obligations, in a degree, by a year's service as Greek tutor.

It was not, apparently, a satisfactory position, for although he dedicated a volume of poems to President Kirkland, "with respect and affection," as to his "early benefactor and friend," yet we have the testimony of George Ticknor (in Miss Ticknor's Life of J. G. Cogswell) that Bancroft was "thwarted in every movement by the President." Mr. Ticknor was himself a professor in the college, and though his view may not have been dispassionate, he must have had the opportunity of knowledge. His statement is rendered more probable by the fact that he records a similar discontent in the case of Professor J. G. Cogswell, who was certainly a man of conciliatory temperament. By Ticknor's account, Mr. Cogswell, who had been arranging the Harvard College Library and preparing the catalogue, was quite unappreciated by the Corporation, and though Ticknor urged both him and Bancroft to stay, they were resolved to leave, even if their proposed school came to nothing. The school in question was the once famous "Round Hill" at Northampton, in which enterprise Cogswell, then thirty-six, and Bancroft, then twenty-three, embarked in 1823. The latter

had already preached several sermons, and seemed to be feeling about for his career; but it now appeared as if he had found it.

In embarking, however, he warbled a sort of swan-song at the close of his academical life, and published in September, 1823, a small volume of eighty pages, printed at the University Press, Cambridge, and entitled "Poems by George Bancroft. Cambridge: Hilliard & Metcalf." Some of these were written in Switzerland, some in Italy, some, after his return home, at Worcester; but almost all were European in theme, and neither better nor worse than the average of such poems by young men of twenty or thereabouts. The first, called "Expectation," is the most noticeable, for it contains an autobiographical glimpse of this young academical Childe Harold setting forth on his pilgrimage: —

"'T was in the season when the sun
More darkly tinges spring's fair brow,
And laughing fields had just begun
The summer's golden hues to show.
Earth still with flowers was richly dight,
And the last rose in gardens glowed;
In heaven's blue tent the sun was bright,
And western winds with fragrance flowed;
'T was then a youth bade home adieu;
And hope was young and life was new,
When first he seized the pilgrim's wand
To roam the far, the foreign land.

"There lives the marble, wrought by art.
That clime the youth would gain; he braves
The ocean's fury, and his heart
Leaps in him, like the sunny waves
That bear him onward; and the light
Of hope within his bosom beams,
Like the phosphoric ray at night
That round the prow so cheerly gleams.
But still his eye would backward turn,
And still his bosom warmly burn,
As towards new worlds he 'gan to roam,
With love for Freedom's Western home."

This is the opening poem; the closing words of the book, at the end of the final "Pictures of Rome," are in a distinctly patriotic strain: —

"Farewell to Rome; how lovely in distress;
How sweet her gloom; how proud her wilderness!
Farewell to all that won my youthful heart,
And waked fond longings after fame. We part.
The weary pilgrim to his home returns;
For Freedom's air, for Western climes he burns;
Where dwell the brave, the generous, and the free,
O! there is Rome; no other Rome for me."

It was in order to train these young children of the Republic — "the brave, the generous, and the free" — that Bancroft entered upon the "Round Hill" enterprise.

This celebrated school belonged to that class of undertakings which are so successful as

to ruin their projectors. It began in a modest way; nothing could be more sensible than the "Prospectus," — a pamphlet of twenty pages, issued at Cambridge, June 20, 1823. In this there is a clear delineation of the defects then existing in American schools; and a modest promise is given that, aided by the European experience of the two founders, something like a French *collège* or a German *gymnasium* might be created. There were to be not more than twenty pupils, who were to be from nine to twelve on entering. A fine estate was secured at Northampton, and pupils soon came in.

Then followed for several years what was at least a very happy family. The school was to be in many respects on the German plan: farm life, friendly companionship, ten-mile rambles through the woods with the teachers, and an annual walking tour in the same company. All instruction was to be thorough; there was to be no direct emulation, and no flogging. There remain good delineations of the school in the memoirs of Dr. Cogswell, and in a paper by the late T. G. Appleton, one of the pupils. It is also described by Duke Bernard of Saxe-Weimar in his "Travels." The material of the school was certainly fortunate. Many men afterwards noted in various ways had their early training there: J. L. Motley, H. W. Bellows,

R. T. S. Lowell, F. Schroeder, Ellery Channing, G. E. Ellis, Theodore Sedgwick, George C. Shattuck, S. G. Ward, R. G. Shaw, N. B. Shurtleff, George Gibbs, Philip Kearney, R. G. Harper. At a dinner given to Dr. Cogswell in 1864, the most profuse expressions of grateful reminiscence were showered upon Mr. Bancroft, though he was then in Europe. The prime object of the school, as stated by Mr. Ticknor, was "to teach *more thoroughly* than has ever been taught among us." How far this was accomplished can only be surmised; what is certain is that the boys enjoyed themselves. They were admirably healthy, not having a case of illness for sixteen months, and they were happy. When we say that, among other delights, the boys had a large piece of land where they had a boy-village of their own, a village known as Cronyville, a village where each boy erected his own shanty and built his own chimney, where he could roast apples and potatoes on a winter evening and call the neighbors in, — when each boy had such absolute felicity as this, with none to molest him or make him afraid, there is no wonder that the "old boys" were ready to feast their kindly pedagogues forty years later.

But to spread barracks for boys and crony villages over the delightful hills of Northampton demanded something more than kindliness;

it needed much administrative skill and some money. Neither Cogswell nor Bancroft was a man of fortune. Instead of twenty boys, they had at one time one hundred and twenty-seven, nearly fifty of whom had to be kept through the summer vacation. They had many Southern pupils and, as an apparent consequence, many bad debts, Mr. Cogswell estimating a loss of two thousand dollars from this cause in a single year; and sometimes they had to travel southward to dun delinquent parents. The result of it all was that Bancroft abandoned the enterprise after seven years, in the summer of 1830; while Cogswell, who held on two years longer, retired with health greatly impaired and a financial loss of twenty thousand dollars. Thus ended the Round Hill School.

While at Round Hill, Mr. Bancroft prepared some text-books for his pupils, translating Heeren's "Politics of Ancient Greece" (1824) and Jacobs's Latin Reader (1825),—the latter going through several editions. His first article in the "North American Review," then the leading literary journal in the United States, appeared in October, 1823, and was a notice of Schiller's "Minor Poems," with many translations. From this time forward he wrote in almost every volume, but always on classical or German themes, until in January, 1831, he took up "The Bank

of the United States," and a few years later (October, 1835), "The Documentary History of the Revolution." These indicated the progress of his historical studies, which had also begun at Round Hill, and took form at last in his great history. The design of this monumental work was as deliberate as Gibbon's, and almost as vast; and the author lived, like Gibbon, to see it accomplished. The first volume appeared in 1834, the second in 1837, the third in 1840, the fourth in 1852, and so onward. Between these volumes was interspersed a variety of minor essays, some of which were collected in a volume of "Literary and Historical Miscellanies," published in 1855. Bancroft also published, as a separate work, a "History of the Formation of the Constitution of the United States" (1882).

While at Northampton, he was an ardent Democrat of the most theoretic and philosophic type, and he very wisely sought to acquaint himself with the practical side of public affairs. In 1826 he gave an address at Northampton, defining his position and sympathies; in 1830 he was elected to the Legislature, but declined to take his seat, and the next year refused a nomination to the Senate. In 1835 he drew up an address to the people of Massachusetts, made many speeches and prepared various sets of resolutions, was flattered, traduced, caricatured.

From 1838 to 1841 he was Collector of the Port of Boston; in 1844 he was Democratic candidate for Governor of Massachusetts, but was defeated, — George N. Briggs being his successful antagonist, — although he received more votes than any Democratic candidate before him. In 1845 he was Secretary of the Navy under President Polk. In all these executive positions he may be said to have achieved success. It was, for instance, during his term of office that the Naval Academy was established at Annapolis; it was he who gave the first order to take possession of California; and he who, while acting for a month as Secretary of War, gave the order to General Taylor to march into Texas, thus ultimately leading to the annexation of that state. This, however, identified him with a transaction justly censurable, and indeed his whole political career occurred during the most questionable period of Democratic subserviency to the slave power, and that weakness was never openly — perhaps never sincerely — resisted by him. This left a reproach upon his earlier political career which has, however, been effaced by his literary life and his honorable career as a diplomatist. In 1846 he was transferred from the Cabinet to the post of Minister Plenipotentiary to Great Britain, where he contrived to combine historical

researches with public functions. In 1849 he returned to this country — a Whig administration having been elected — and took up his residence in New York. In February, 1866, he was selected by Congress to pronounce a eulogy on President Lincoln, and in the following year he was appointed Minister to Prussia, being afterwards successively accredited to the North German Confederation and the German Empire. In these positions he succeeded in effecting some important treaty provisions in respect to the rights of naturalized German citizens residing in Germany. He was recalled at his own request in 1874, and thenceforward resided in Washington in the winter, and at Newport, Rhode Island, in summer.

Dividing his life between these two abodes, he passed his later years in a sort of existence more common in Europe than here, — the well-earned dignity of the scholar who has also been, in his day, a man of affairs, and who is yet too energetic to repose upon his laurels or waste much time upon merely enjoying the meed of fame he has won. In both his winter and summer abodes he had something of the flattering position of First Citizen; he was free of all sets, an honored member of all circles. His manners were often mentioned as "courtly," but they never quite rose to the level of either

of the two classes of manner described by Tennyson: —

> "Kind nature is the best, those manners next
> That fit us like a nature second-hand;
> Which are indeed the manners of the great."

Neither of these descriptions exactly fitted Mr. Bancroft; his manners were really of the composite sort, and curiously suggestive of the different phases of his life. They were like that wonderful Japanese lacquer-work, made up of twenty or thirty different coats or films, usually laid on by several different workmen. There was at the foundation the somewhat formal and literal manner of the scholar, almost of the pedagogue: then one caught a glimpse of an executive, official style, that seemed to date from the period when he ordered California to be occupied; and over all there was a varnish of worldly courtesy, enhanced by an evident pleasure in being admired, and broken by an occasional outburst of rather blunt sincerity.

But he matured and mellowed well; his social life at Washington was more satisfactory to himself and others than that he led in New York; he had voluntarily transplanted himself to a community which, with all its faults and crudities, sets intellect above wealth, and readily conceded the highest place to a man like Ban-

croft. Foreign ministers came accredited to him as well as to the government; he was the friend of every successive administration, and had as many guests as he cared to see at his modest Sunday evening receptions. There he greeted every one cordially, aided by a wife amply gifted in the amenities. He was kind to everybody, and remembered the father or grandfather of anybody who had any such ancestors whom it was desirable to mention. In summer, at Newport, it was the same; his residence was like that described by his imagination in one of his own early poems —

> "Where heaven lends her loveliest scene,
> A softened air, a sky serene,
> Along the shore where smiles the sea."

Unlike most Newport "cottages," his house was within sight of the ocean; between it and the sea lay the garden, and the "rose in Kenmure's cap" in the Scottish ballad was not a characteristic more invariable than the same flower in Mr. Bancroft's hand or buttonhole. His form was familiar, too, on Bellevue Avenue, taking as regularly as any old-fashioned Englishman his daily horseback exercise. At the same time he was one of the few men who were capable, even in Newport, of doing daily the day's work; he rose fabulously early in the

morning, and kept a secretary or two always employed. Since John Quincy Adams, there has not been among us such an example of laborious, self-exacting, seemingly inexhaustible old age; and, unlike Adams, Mr. Bancroft kept his social side always fresh and active, and did not have, like the venerable ex-President, to force himself out in the evening in order "to learn the art of conversation." This combination, with his monumental literary work, will keep his memory secure. It will possibly outlive that of many men of greater inspiration, loftier aims, and sublimer qualities.

Mr. Bancroft, as an historian, combined some of the greatest merits and some of the profoundest defects ever united in a single author. His merits are obvious enough. He had great enthusiasm for his subject. He was profoundly imbued with that democratic spirit without which the history of the United States cannot be justly written. He has the graphic quality so wanting in Hildreth, and the piquancy whose absence makes Prescott too smooth. He has a style essentially picturesque, whatever may be its faults. The reader is compelled to admit that his resources in the way of preparation are inexhaustible, and that his command of them is astounding. One must follow him minutely, for instance, through the history of the War for

Independence, to appreciate in full the consummate grasp of a mind which can deploy military events in a narrative as a general deploys brigades in a field. Add to this the capacity for occasional maxims to the highest degree profound and lucid, in the way of political philosophy, and you certainly combine in one man some of the greatest qualities of the historian.

Against this are to be set very grave faults. In his earlier editions there was an habitual pomposity and inflation of style which the sterner taste of his later years has so modified that we must now condone it. The same heroic revision has cut off many tame and commonplace remarks as trite as those virtuous truisms by which second-rate actors bring down the applause of the galleries at cheap theatres. Many needless philosophical digressions have shared the same fate. But many faults remain. There is, in the first place, that error so common with the graphic school of historians, — the exaggerated estimate of manuscript or fragmentary material at the expense of what is printed and permanent. In many departments of history this dependence is inevitable; but, unfortunately, Mr. Bancroft was not, except in the very earliest volumes of his history, dealing with such departments. The loose and mythical period of our history really ends with Captain John

Smith. From the moment when the Pilgrims landed, the main facts of American history are to be found recorded in a series of carefully prepared documents, made by men to whom the pen was familiar, and who were exceedingly methodical in all their ways. The same is true of all the struggles which led to the Revolution, and of all those which followed. They were the work of honest-minded Anglo-Saxon men who, if they issued so much as a street hand-bill, said just what they meant, and meant precisely what they said. To fill the gaps in this solid documentary chain is, no doubt, desirable, — to fill them by every passing rumor, every suggestion of a French agent's busy brain ; but to substitute this inferior matter for the firmer basis is wrong. Much of the graphic quality of Mr. Bancroft's writing is obtained by this means, and this portends, in certain directions, a future shrinkage and diminution in his fame.

A fault far more serious than this is one which Mr. Bancroft shared with his historical contemporaries, but in which he far exceeded any of them, — an utter ignoring of the very meaning and significance of a quotation-mark. Others of that day sinned. The long controversy between Jared Sparks and Lord Mahon grew out of this, — from the liberties taken by Sparks in editing Washington's letters. Professor Edward

T. Channing did the same thing in quoting the racy diaries of his grandfather, William Ellery, and substituting, for instance, in a passage cited as original, "We refreshed ourselves with meat and drink," for the far racier "We refreshed our Stomachs with Beefsteaks and Grogg." Hildreth, in quoting from the "Madison Papers," did the same, for the sake not of propriety, but of convenience; even Frothingham made important omissions and variations, without indicating them, in quoting Hooke's remarkable sermon, "New England's Teares." But Bancroft is the chief of sinners in this respect; when he quotes a contemporary document or letter, it is absolutely impossible to tell, without careful verifying, whether what he gives us between the quotation-marks is precisely what should be there, or whether it is a compilation, rearrangement, selection, or even a series of mere paraphrases of his own. It would be easy to illustrate this abundantly, especially from the Stamp Act volume; but a single instance will suffice.

When, in 1684, an English fleet sailed into Boston harbor, ostensibly on its way to attack the Dutch settlements on the Hudson, it left behind a royal commission, against whose mission of interference the colonial authorities at once protested, and they issued a paper, as one

historian has said, "in words so clear and dignified as to give a foretaste of the Revolutionary state papers that were to follow a century later." If ever there was a document in our pre-Revolutionary history that ought to be quoted precisely as it was written, or not at all, it was this remonstrance. It thus begins in Bancroft's version, and the words have often been cited by others. He says of the colony of Massachusetts: "Preparing a remonstrance, not against deeds of tyranny, but the menace of tyranny, not against actual wrong, but against a principle of wrong, on the 25th of October, it thus addressed King Charles II." The alleged address is then given, apparently in full, and then follows the remark, "The spirit of the people corresponded with this address." It will hardly be believed that there never was any such address, and that no such document was ever in existence as that so formally cited here. Yet any one who will compare Bancroft's draft with the original in the Records of Massachusetts (volume iv, part 2, pages 168–169) will be instantly convinced of this. Bancroft has simply taken phrases and sentences here and there from a long document and rearranged, combined, and, in some cases, actually paraphrased them in his own way. Logically and rhetorically the work is his own. The colonial authorities adopted

their own way of composition, and he adopted his. In some sentences we have Bancroft, not Endicott; the nineteenth century, not the seventeenth. Whether the transformation is an improvement or not is not the question; the thing cited is not the original. An accurate historian would no more have issued such a restatement under the shelter of quotation-marks than an accurate theologian would have rewritten the Ten Commandments and read his improved edition from the pulpit. And it is a curious fact that while Mr. Bancroft has amended so much else in his later editions, he has left this passage untouched, and still implies an adherence to the tradition that this is the way to write history.

It is also to be noted that the evil is doubled when this practice is combined with the other habit, already mentioned, of relying largely upon manuscript authorities. If an historian garbles, paraphrases, and rearranges when he is dealing with matter accessible to all, how much greater the peril when he is dealing with what is in written documents held under his own lock and key. It is not necessary to allege intentional perversion, but we are, at the very least, absolutely at the mercy of an inaccurate habit of mind. The importance of this point is directly manifested on opening the leaves of

Mr. Bancroft's last and perhaps most valuable book, "The History of the Constitution." The most important part of this book consists, by concession of all, in the vast mass of selections from the private correspondence of the period: for instance, of M. Otto, the French Ambassador. We do not hesitate to say that, if tried by the standard of Mr. Bancroft's previous literary methods, this mass of correspondence, though valuable as suggestion, is worthless as authority. Until it has been carefully collated and compared with the originals, we do not know that a paragraph or a sentence of it is left as the author wrote it; the system of paraphrase previously exhibited throws the shadow of doubt over all. No person can safely cite one of these letters in testimony; no person knows whether any particular statement contained in it comes to us in the words of its supposed author or of Mr. Bancroft. It is no answer to say that this loose method was the method of certain Greek historians; if Thucydides composed speeches for his heroes, it was at least known that he prepared them, and there was not the standing falsehood of a quotation-mark.

A drawback quite as serious is to be found in this, that Mr. Bancroft's extraordinary labors in old age were not usually devoted to revising the grounds of his own earlier judgments, but

to perfecting his own style of expression, and to weaving in additional facts at those points which especially interested him. Professor Agassiz used to say that the greatest labor of the student of biology came from the enormous difficulty of keeping up with current publications and the proceedings of societies; a man could carry on his own observations, but he could not venture to publish them without knowing all the latest statements made by other observers. Mr. Bancroft had to encounter the same obstacle in his historical work, and it must be owned that he sometimes ignored it. Absorbed in his own great stores of material, he often let the work of others go unobserved. It would be easy to multiply instances. Thus, the controversies about Verrazzano's explorations were conveniently settled by omitting his name altogether; there was no revision of the brief early statement that the Norse sagas were "mythological," certainly one of the least appropriate adjectives that could have been selected; Mr. Bancroft never even read — up to within a few years of his death, at any rate — the important monographs of Varnhagen in respect to Amerigo Vespucci; he did not keep up with the publications of the historical societies. Laboriously revising his whole history in 1876, and almost rewriting it for the edition of 1884, he allowed

the labors of younger investigators to go on around him unobserved. The consequence is that much light has been let in upon American history in directions where he has not so much as a window; and there are points where his knowledge, vast as it is, will be found to have been already superseded. In this view, that cannot be asserted of him which the late English historian, Mr. J. R. Green, proudly and justly claimed for himself: "I know what men will say of me — he died learning." But Mr. Bancroft at least died laboring, and in the harness.

Mr. Bancroft was twice married, first to Miss Sarah H. Dwight, who died June 26, 1837, and in the following year to Mrs. Elizabeth (Davis) Bliss. By the first marriage he had several children, of whom John Chandler (Harvard, 1854) died in Europe, and George (Harvard, 1856) has spent most of his life in foreign countries.

# X

# CHARLES ELIOT NORTON

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It is a tradition in the city of Cambridge, Massachusetts, that Howells used to exult, on arriving from his Western birthplace, in having at length met for the first time, in Charles Eliot Norton, the only man he had ever seen who had been cultivated up to the highest point of which he was capable. To this the verdict of all Cambridge readily assented. What the neighbors could not at that time foresee was that the man thus praised would ever live to be an octogenarian, or that in doing so he would share those attractions of constantly increasing mildness and courtesy which are so often justly claimed for advancing years. There was in him, at an earlier period, a certain amount of visible self-will, and a certain impatience with those who dissented from him, — he would not have been his father's son had it been otherwise. But these qualities diminished, and he grew serener and more patient with others as the years went on. Happy is he who has lived long enough to say with Goethe, "It is only necessary to grow old to become more indulgent. I see no fault committed which I have not committed myself."

This milder and more genial spirit increased constantly as Norton grew older, until it served at last only to make his high-bred nature more attractive.

He was born in Cambridge, November 16, 1827, and died in the very house where he was born, October 21, 1908. He was descended, like several other New England authors, from a line of Puritan clergymen. He was the son of Professor Andrews Norton, of Harvard University, who was descended from the Rev. John Norton, born in Ipswich, Massachusetts, in 1651. The mother of the latter was the daughter of Emanuel Downing, and the niece of Governor John Winthrop. Mrs. Bradstreet, the well-known Puritan poetess, was also an ancestress of Charles Norton. His mother, Mrs. Caroline (Eliot) Norton, had also her ancestry among the most cultivated families in New England, the name of Eliot having been prominent for successive generations in connection with Harvard College. His parents had a large and beautiful estate in Cambridge, and were (if my memory serves me right) the one family in Cambridge that kept a carriage, — a fact the more impressed upon remembrance because it bore the initials "A. & C. N." upon the panels, the only instance I have ever seen in which the two joint proprietorships were thus expressed. This, and

the fact that I learned by heart in childhood Wordsworth's poem, "The White Doe of Rylstone, or The Fate of the Nortons," imparted to my youthful mind a slight feeling of romance about the Cambridge household of that name, which was not impaired by the fact that our parents on both sides were intimate friends, that we lived in the same street (now called Kirkland Street), and that I went to dancing-school at the Norton house. It is perhaps humiliating to add that I disgraced myself on the very first day by cutting off little Charlie's front hair as a preliminary to the dancing lesson.

The elder Professor Norton was one of the most marked characters in Cambridge, and, although never a clergyman, was professor in the Theological School. It was said of him by George Ripley, with whom he had a bitter contest, that "He often expressed rash and hasty judgments in regard to the labors of recent or contemporary scholars, consulting his prejudices, as it would seem, rather than competent authority. But in his own immediate department of sacred learning he is entitled to the praise of sobriety of thought and profoundness of investigation" (Frothingham's "Ripley," 105). He was also a man of unusual literary tastes, and his "Select Journal of Foreign Periodical Literature," although too early discontinued, took dis-

tinctly the lead of all American literary journals up to that time.

The very beginning of Charles Norton's career would seem at first sight singularly in contrast with his later pursuits, and yet doubtless had formed, in some respects, an excellent preparation for them. Graduating at Harvard in 1846, and taking a fair rank at graduation, he was soon after sent into a Boston counting-house to gain a knowledge of the East India trade. In 1849 he went as supercargo on a merchant ship bound for India, in which country he traveled extensively, and returned home through Europe in 1851. There are few more interesting studies in the development of literary individuality than are to be found in the successive works bearing Norton's name, as one looks through the list of them in the Harvard Library. The youth who entered upon literature anonymously, at the age of twenty-five, as a compiler of hymns under the title of "Five Christmas Hymns" in 1852, and followed this by "A Book of Hymns for Young Persons" in 1854, did not even flinch from printing the tragically Calvinistic verse which closes Addison's famous hymn, beginning "The Lord my pasture shall prepare," with a conclusion so formidable as death's "gloomy horrors" and "dreadful shade." In 1855 he edited, with Dr.

Ezra Abbot, his father's translations of the Gospels with notes (2 vols.), and his "Evidences of the Genuineness of the Gospels" (3 vols.). Charles Norton made further visits to Europe in 1855–57, and again resided there from 1868 until 1873; during which time his rapidly expanding literary acquaintanceships quite weaned his mind from the early atmosphere of theology.

Although one of the writers in the very first number of the "Atlantic Monthly," he had no direct part in its planning. He wrote to me (January 9, 1899), "I am sorry that I can tell you nothing about the *primordia* of the 'Atlantic.' I was in Europe in 1856–57, whence I brought home some MSS. for the new magazine." It appears from his later statement in the Anniversary Number that he had put all these manuscripts by English authors in a trunk together, but that this trunk and all the manuscripts were lost, except one accidentally left unpacked, which was a prose paper by James Hannay on Douglas Jerrold, "who is hardly," as Norton justly says, "to be reckoned among the immortals." Hannay is yet more thoroughly forgotten. But this inadequate service in respect to foreign material was soon more than balanced, as one sees on tracing the list of papers catalogued under Norton's name in the Atlantic Index.

To appreciate the great variety and thorough

preliminary preparation of Norton's mind, a student must take one of the early volumes of the "Atlantic Monthly" and see how largely he was relied upon for literary notices. If we examine, for instance, the fifth volume (1860), we find in the first number a paper on Clough's "Plutarch's Lives," comprising ten pages of small print in double columns. There then follow in the same volume papers on Hodson's "Twelve Years of a Soldier's Life in India," on "Friends in Council," on Brooks's "Sermons," on Trollope's "West Indies and the Spanish Main," on "Captain John Brown," on Vernon's "Dante," and one on "Model Lodging-Houses in Boston." When we remember that his "Notes of Travel and Study in Italy" was also published in Boston that same year, being reviewed by some one in a notice of two pages in this same volume of the "Atlantic," we may well ask who ever did more of genuine literary work in the same amount of time. This was, of course, before he became Professor in the college (1874), and his preoccupation in that way, together with his continuous labor on his translations of Dante, explains why there are comparatively few entries under his name in Atlantic Indexes for later years. Again, he and Lowell took charge of the "North American Review" in 1864, and retained it until 1868,

during which period Norton unquestionably worked quite as hard as before, if we may judge by the collective index to that periodical.

It is to be noticed, however, that his papers in the "North American" are not merely graver and more prolonged, but less terse and highly finished, than those in the "Atlantic"; while in the development of his mind they show even greater freedom of statement. He fearlessly lays down, for instance, the following assertion, a very bold one for that period: "So far as the most intelligent portion of society at the present day is concerned, the Church in its actual constitution is an anachronism. Much of the deepest and most religious life is led outside its wall, and there is a constant and steady increase in those who not only find the claims of the Church inconsistent with spiritual liberty, but also find its services ill adapted to their wants. . . . It becomes more and more a simple assemblage of persons gathered to go through with certain formal ceremonies, the chief of which consists in listening to a man who is seldom competent to teach." It must be remembered that the expression of such opinions to-day, when all his charges against the actual Church may be found similarly stated by bishops and doctors of divinity, must have produced a very different impression when

made forty years ago by a man of forty or thereabouts, who occupied twenty pages in saying it, and rested in closing upon the calm basis, "The true worship of God consists in the service of his children and devotion to the common interests of men." It may be that he who wrote these words never held a regular pew in any church or identified himself, on the other hand, with any public heretical organization, even one so moderate as the Free Religious Association. Yet the fact that he devoted his Sunday afternoons for many years to talking and Scripture reading in a Hospital for Incurables conducted by Roman Catholics perhaps showed that it was safer to leave such a man to go on his own course and reach the kingdom of heaven in his own way,

Norton never wrote about himself, if it could be avoided, unless his recollections of early years, as read before the Cambridge Historical Society, and reported in the second number of its proceedings, may be regarded as an exception. Something nearest to this in literary self-revelation is to be found, perhaps, in his work entitled "Letters of John Ruskin," published in 1904, and going back to his first invitation from the elder Ruskin in 1855. This was on Norton's first direct trip to Europe, followed by a correspondence in which Ruskin writes to

him, February 25, 1861, "You have also done me no little good," and other phrases which show how this American, nine years younger than himself, had already begun to influence that wayward mind. Their correspondence was suspended, to be sure, by their difference of attitude on the American Civil War; but it is pleasant to find that after ten months of silence Ruskin wrote to Norton again, if bitterly. Later still, we find successive letters addressed to Norton — now in England again — in this loving gradation, "Dear Norton," "My dearest Norton," "My dear Charles," and "My dearest Charles," and thenceforth the contest is won. Not all completed, however, for in the last years of life Ruskin addressed "Darling Charles," and the last words of his own writing traced in pencil "From your loving J. R."

I have related especially this one touching tale of friendship, because it was the climax of them all, and the best illustration of the essential Americanism of Norton's career.

He indeed afforded a peculiar and almost unique instance in New England, not merely of a cultivated man who makes his home for life in the house where he was born, but of one who has recognized for life the peculiar associations of his boyhood and has found them still the best. While Ruskin was pitying him for

being doomed to wear out his life in America, Norton with pleasure made his birthplace his permanent abode, and fully recognized the attractions of the spot where he was born. "What a fine microcosm," he wrote to me (January 9, 1899), "Cambridge and Boston and Concord made in the 40's." Norton affords in this respect a great contrast to his early comrade, William Story, who shows himself in his letters wholly detached from his native land, and finds nothing whatever in his boyhood abode to attract him, although it was always found attractive, not merely by Norton, but by Agassiz and Longfellow, neither of whom was a native of Cambridge.

The only safeguard for a solitary literary workman lies in the sequestered house without a telephone. This security belonged for many years to Norton, until the needs of a growing family made him a seller of land, a builder of a high-railed fence, and at last, but reluctantly, a subscriber to the telephone. It needs but little study of the cards bearing his name in the catalogue of the Harvard Library to see on how enormous a scale his work has been done in this seclusion. It is then only that one remembers his eight volumes of delicately arranged scrap-books extending from 1861 to 1866, and his six volumes of "Heart of Oak"

selections for childhood. There were comparatively few years of his maturer life during which he was not editor of something, and there was also needed much continuous labor in taking care of his personal library. When we consider that he had the further responsibility of being practically the literary executor or editor of several important men of letters, as of Carlyle, Ruskin, Lowell, Curtis, and Clough; and that in each case the work was done with absolute thoroughness; and that even in summer he became the leading citizen of a country home and personally engaged the public speakers who made his rural festals famous, it is impossible not to draw the conclusion that no public man in America surpassed the sequestered Norton in steadfastness of labor.

It being made my duty in June, 1904, to read a poem before the Harvard Phi Beta Kappa, I was tempted to include a few verses about individual graduates, each of which was left, according to its subject, for the audience to guess. The lines referring to Norton were as follows: —

"There 's one I 've watched from childhood, free of guile,
His man's firm courage and his woman's smile.
His portals open to the needy still,
He spreads calm sunshine over Shady Hill."

The reference to the combined manly and womanly qualities of Norton spoke for itself, and won applause even before the place of residence was uttered; and I received from Norton this recognition of the little tribute: —

ASHFIELD, 2 July, 1904.

MY DEAR HIGGINSON, — Your friendly words about me in your Phi Beta poem give me so much pleasure that I cannot refrain from thanking you for them. I care for them specially as a memorial of our hereditary friendship. They bring to mind my Mother's affection for your Mother, and for Aunt Nancy, who was as dear an Aunt to us children at Shady Hill as she was to you and your brothers and sisters. What dear and admirable women! What simple, happy lives they led! No one's heart will be more deeply touched by your poem than mine.

One most agreeable result of Norton's Cambridge boyhood has not been generally recognized by those who have written about him. His inherited estate was so large that he led a life absolutely free in respect to the study of nature, and as Lowell, too, had the same advantage, they could easily compare notes. In answer to a criticism of mine with reference to Longfellow's poem, "The Herons of Elmwood," on my theory that these herons merely flew over Elmwood and only built their nests in what were

then the dense swamps east of Fresh Pond, he writes to me (January 4, 1899): "I cannot swear that I ever saw a heron's nest at Elmwood. But Lowell told me of their nesting there, and only a few weeks ago Mrs. Burnett told me of the years when they had built in the pines and of the time of their final desertion of the place." To this he adds in a note dated five days later: "As to the night-herons lighting on pines, for many years they were in the habit of lighting and staying for hours upon mine and then flying off towards the [Chelsea] beach." This taste accounts for the immense zest and satisfaction with which Norton edited a hitherto unknown manuscript of the poet Gray's on natural history, with admirable illustrations taken from the original book, seeming almost incredibly accurate from any but a professional naturalist, the book being entitled, "The Poet Gray as a Naturalist with Selections from His Notes on the Systema Naturæ of Linnæus with Facsimiles of Some of his Drawings."

In the Charles Eliot Norton number of the "Harvard Graduates' Magazine" commemorating his eightieth birthday, Professor Palmer, with that singular felicity which characterizes him, says of Norton: "He has been an epitome of the world's best thought brought to our own doors and opened for our daily use." Edith

Wharton with equal felicity writes from Norton's well-known dwelling at Ashfield, whose very name, "High Pasture," gives a signal for what follows: —

"Come up — come up; in the dim vale below
The autumn mist muffles the fading trees,
But on this keen hill-pasture, though the breeze
Has stretched the thwart boughs bare to meet the snow,
Night is not, autumn is not — but the flow
Of vast, ethereal and irradiate seas,
Poured from the far world's flaming boundaries
In waxing tides of unimagined glow.

"And to that height illumined of the mind
He calls us still by the familiar way,
Leaving the sodden tracks of life behind,
Befogged in failure, chilled with love's decay —
Showing us, as the night-mists upward wind,
How on the heights is day and still more day."

But I must draw to a close, and shall do this by reprinting the very latest words addressed by this old friend to me; these being written very near his last days. Having been away from Cambridge all summer, I did not know that he had been at Cambridge or ill, and on my writing to him received this cheerful and serene answer, wholly illustrative of the man, although the very fact that it was dictated was sadly ominous: —

Shady Hill, Cambridge, Mass.,
6 October, 1908.

My dear Higginson, — Your letter the other day from Ipswich gave me great pleasure. . . .

It had never occurred to me that you were associated with Ipswich through your Appleton relatives. My association with the old town, whose charm has not wholly disappeared under the hard hoof of the invader, begins still earlier than yours, for the William Norton who landed there in 1636 was my direct ancestor; and a considerable part of his pretty love story seems to have been transacted there. I did not know the story until I came upon it by accident, imbedded in some of the volumes of the multifarious publications of our historical society. It amused me to find that John Norton, whose reputation is not for romance or for soft-heartedness, took an active interest in pleading his brother's cause with Governor Winthrop, whose niece, Lucy Downing, had won the susceptible heart of W. N.

My summer was a very peaceful and pleasant one here in my old home till about six weeks ago, when I was struck down . . . which has left me in a condition of extreme muscular feebleness, but has not diminished my interest in the world and its affairs. Happily my eyes are still good for reading, and I have fallen back, as always on similar occasions, on Shakespeare and Scott, but I have read one or two new books also, the best of which, and a book of highest quality, is the last volume of Morley's essays.

But I began meaning only to thank you for your pleasant note and to send a cheer to you from my slower craft as your gallant three-master goes by it with all sails set. . . .

Always cordially yours,

C. E. Norton.

# XI

# EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN

# EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN

THE sudden death of Edmund Clarence Stedman at New York on January 18, 1908, came with a strange pathos upon the readers of his many writings, especially as following so soon upon that of his life-long friend and compeer, Aldrich. Stedman had been for some years an invalid, and had received, in his own phrase, his "three calls," that life would soon be ended. He was born at Hartford, Connecticut, on October 8, 1833, and was the second son of Colonel Edmund Burke Stedman and his wife Elizabeth Clement (Dodge) Stedman. His great-grandfather was the Reverend Aaron Cleveland, Jr., a Harvard graduate of 1735, and a man of great influence in his day, who died in middle life under the hospitable roof of Benjamin Franklin. Stedman's mother was a woman of much literary talent, and had great ultimate influence in the training of her son, although she was early married again to the Honorable William B. Kinney, who was afterwards the United States Minister to Turin. Her son, being placed in charge of a great-uncle, spent his childhood in Norwich, Connecticut, and entered Yale at sixteen, but did not complete his course there,

although in later life he was restored to his class membership and received the degree of Master of Arts. He went early into newspaper work in Norwich and then in New York, going to the front for a time as newspaper correspondent during the Civil War. He abandoned journalism after ten years or thereabouts, and became a member of the New York Stock Exchange without giving up his literary life, a combination apt to be of doubtful success. He married, at twenty, Laura Hyde Woodworth, who died before him, as did one of his sons, leaving only one son and a granddaughter as his heirs. His funeral services took place at the Church of the Messiah on January 21, 1908, conducted by the Reverend Dr. Robert Collyer and the Reverend Dr. Henry van Dyke.

Those who happen to turn back to the number of the "Atlantic Monthly" for January, 1898, will read with peculiar interest a remarkable paper entitled "Our Two Most Honored Poets." It bears no author's name, even in the Index, but is what we may venture to call, after ten years, a singularly penetrating analysis of both Aldrich and Stedman. Of the latter it is said: "His rhythmic sense is subtle, and he often attains an aerial waywardness of melody which is of the very essence of the lyric gift."

It also remarks most truly and sadly of Stedman that he "is of those who have suffered the stress of the day." The critic adds: "Just now we felt grateful to Mr. Aldrich for putting all this [that is, life's tragedies] away in order that the clarity and sweetness of his art might not suffer; now we feel something like reverence for the man [Mr. Stedman] who, in conditions which make for contentment and acquiescence, has not been able to escape these large afflictions." But these two gifted men have since passed away, Aldrich from a career of singular contentment, Stedman after ten years of almost constant business failure and a series of calamities relating to those nearest and dearest.

One of the most prominent men in the New York literary organizations, and one who knew Stedman intimately, writes me thus in regard to the last years of his life: "As you probably know, Stedman died poor. Only a few days ago he told me that after paying all the debts hanging over him for years from the business losses caused by ——'s mismanagement, he had not enough to live on, and must keep on with his literary work. For this he had various plans, of which our conversations developed only a possible rearrangement of his past writings; an article now and then for the magazines (one, I am told, he left completed); and reminiscences

of his old friends among men of letters — for which last he had, during eight months past, been overhauling letters and papers, but had written nothing. He was ailing, he said — had a serious heart affection which troubled him for years, and he found it a daily struggle to keep up with the daily claims on his time. You know what he was, in respect of letters, — and letters. He could always say 'No' with animation; but in the case of claims on his time by poets and other of the writing class, he never could do the negative. He both liked the claims and did n't. The men who claimed were dear to him, partly because he knew them, partly because he was glad to know them. He wore himself quite out. His heart was exhausted by his brain. It was a genuine case of heart-failure to do what the head required."

There lies before me a mass of private letters to me from Stedman, dating back to November 2, 1873, when he greeted me for the first time in a kinship we had just discovered. We had the same great-grandfather, though each connection was through the mother, we being alike great-grandchildren of the Reverend Aaron Cleveland, Jr., from whom President Grover Cleveland was also descended. At the time of this mutual discovery Stedman was established in New York, and although I sometimes met him in person, I can

find no letters from him until after a period of more than ten years, when he was engaged in editing his Library of American Literature. He wrote to me afterwards, and often with quite cousinly candor, — revealing frankly his cares, hopes, and sorrows, but never with anything coarse or unmanly. All his enterprises were confided to me so far as literature was concerned, and I, being nearly ten years older, felt free to say what I thought of them. I wished, especially, however, to see him carry out a project of translations from the Greek pastoral poetry of Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus. The few fragments given at the end of his volumes had always delighted me and many other students, while his efforts at the "Agamemnon" of Æschylus dealt with passages too formidable in their power for any one but Edward FitzGerald to undertake.

After a few years of occasional correspondence, there came a lull. Visiting New York rarely, I did not know of Stedman's business perplexities till they came upon me in the following letter, which was apparently called out by one of mine written two months before.

71 West 54th Street,
New York, July 12th, '82.

My Dear Colonel, — I had gone over with "the majority" [that is, to Europe], when your friendly

card of May 9th was written, and it finally reached me at Venice. In that city of light, air, and heavenly noiselessness, my son and myself at last had settled ourselves in ideal rooms, overlooking the Grand Canal. We had seclusion, the Molo, the Lagoon, and a good café, and pure and cheap Capri wine. Our books and papers were unpacked for the first time, and I was ready to make an end of the big and burdensome book which I ought to have finished a year ago. *Dis aliter visum!* The next morning I was awakened to receive news, by wire, of a business loss which brought me home, through the new Gothard tunnel and by the first steamer. Here I am, patching up other people's blunders, with the thermometer in the nineties. I have lived through worse troubles, but am in no very good humor. Let me renew the amenities of life, by way of improving my disposition: and I'll begin by thanking you for calling my attention to the error *in re* Palfrey — which, of course, I shall correct. Another friend has written me to say that Lowell's father was a Unitarian — not a Congregationalist. But Lowell himself told me, the other day, that his father never would call himself a Unitarian, and that he was old-fashioned in his home tenets and discipline. Mr. L. [Lowell] was under pretty heavy pressure, as you know, when I saw him, but holding his own with some composure — for a poet. Again thanking you, I am,

Always truly yrs.,

E. C. Stedman.

This must have been answered by some further expression of solicitude, for this reply came, two months later, —

University Club, 370 Fifth Avenue,
NEW YORK, Sunday, Sept. 16, 1883.

MY DEAR HIGGINSON, — There *is* a good deal, say what you will, in "moral support." I have proved it during the last few weeks: 't would have been hard to get through with them, but for just such words as yours. And I have had them in such abundance that, despite rather poor displays of human nature in a sample of my own manufacture, I am less than ever a pessimist.

As for that which Sophocles pronounced the father of meanness — πενία — both my wife and myself have been used to it nearly all our lives, and probably shall have, now, to renew our old acquaintance with it. Though somewhat demoralized by a few years of Philistine comfort — the *Persicos apparatus*, &c. — I think we shall get along with sufficient dignity.

We have suffered more, however, than the money-loss, bad as that is. And hence we are doubly grateful to those who, like yourself, send a cheery voice to us at just this time.

Ever sincerely yrs.,
EDMUND C. STEDMAN.

During the next few years we had ample correspondence of a wholly literary and cheerful tone. He became engaged upon his Library of American Literature with a congenial fellow

worker, Miss Ellen Hutchinson, and I was only one of many who lent a hand or made suggestions. He was working very hard, and once wrote that he was going for a week to his boyhood home to rest. During all this period there was, no doubt, the painful business entanglement in the background, but there was also in the foreground the literary work whose assuaging influence only one who has participated in it can understand. Then came another blow in the death of his mother, announced to me as follows: —

44 East 26th St.,
New York, Dec. 8th, 1889.

My dear Higginson, — Yes: I have been through a kind of Holy Week, and have come out in so incorporeal a state that I strive painfully, though most gratefully, to render thanks to some, at least, of my beautiful mother's friends and mine who have taken note of her departure. I have always wished that she and you could know more of each other — though nothing of yours escaped her eager taste and judgment, for she was not only a natural critic, but a very *clanswoman*, with a most loyal faith in her blood and yours. Most of all, she was a typical woman, an intensely human one, to the last, though made of no common clay. She was of an age to die, and I am glad that her fine intelligence was spared a season of dimness. Still, *I* have suffered a loss, and doubtless one that will last a lifetime.

Sincerely yours, E. C. Stedman.

The laborious volumes of literary selections having been completed, there followed, still under the same pressure, another series of books yet more ambitious. His "Victorian Poets" (1875, thirteenth edition 1887) was followed by the "Poets of America" (1885), "A Victorian Anthology" (1895), and "An American Anthology" (1900). These books were what gave him his fame, the two former being original studies of literature, made in prose; and the two latter being collections of poetry from the two nations.

If we consider how vast a labor was represented in all those volumes, it is interesting to revert to that comparison between Stedman and his friend Aldrich with which this paper began. Their literary lives led them apart; that of Aldrich tending always to condensation, that of Stedman to expansion. As a consequence, Aldrich seemed to grow younger and younger with years and Stedman older; his work being always valuable, but often too weighty, "living in thoughts, not breaths," to adopt the delicate distinction from Bailey's "Festus." There is a certain worth in all that Stedman wrote, be it longer or shorter, but it needs a good deal of literary power to retain the attention of readers so long as some of his chapters demand. Opening at random his "Poets of America," one may

find the author deep in a discussion of Lowell, for instance, and complaining of that poet's prose or verse. "Not compactly moulded," Stedman says, even of much of Lowell's work. "He had a way, moreover, of 'dropping' like his own bobolink, of letting down his fine passages with odd conceits, mixed metaphors, and licenses which, as a critic, he would not overlook in another. To all this add a knack of coining uncouth words for special tints of meaning, when there are good enough counters in the language for any poet's need." These failings, Stedman says, "have perplexed the poet's friends and teased his reviewers." Yet Lowell's critic is more chargeable with diffuseness than is Lowell himself in prose essays, which is saying a good deal. Stedman devotes forty-five pages to Lowell and thirty-nine even to Bayard Taylor, while he gives to Thoreau but a few scattered lines and no pretense at a chapter. There are, unquestionably, many fine passages scattered through the book, as where he keenly points out that the first European appreciation of American literature was "almost wholly due to grotesque and humorous exploits — a welcome such as a prince in his breathing-hour might give to a new-found jester or clown"; and when he says, in reply to English criticism, that there is "something worth an estimate in

the division of an ocean gulf, that makes us like the people of a new planet."

Turning back to Stedman's earlier book, the "Victorian Poets," one finds many a terse passage, as where he describes Landor as a "royal Bohemian in art," or compares the same author's death in Florence at ninety, a banished man, to "the death of some monarch of the forest, most untamed when powerless." Such passages redeem a book from the danger of being forgotten, but they cannot in the long run save it from the doom which awaits too great diffuseness in words. During all this period of hard work, he found room also for magazine articles, always thoroughly done. Nowhere is there a finer analysis, on the whole, of the sources of difficulty in Homeric translation than will be found in Stedman's review of Bryant's translation of Homer, and nowhere a better vindication of a serious and carefully executed book ("Atlantic Monthly," May, 1872). He wrote also an admirable volume of lectures on the "Nature and Elements of Poetry" for delivery at Johns Hopkins University.

As years went on, our correspondence inevitably grew less close. On March 10, 1893, he wrote, "I am so driven at this season, 'let alone' financial worries, that I have to write letters when and where I can." Then follows

a gap of seven years; in 1900 his granddaughter writes on October 25, conveying affectionate messages from him; two years after, April 2, 1903, he writes himself in the same key, then adds, "Owing to difficulties absolutely beyond my control, I have written scarcely a line for myself since the Yale bicentennial [1901]"; and concludes, "I am very warmly your friend and kinsman." It was a full, easy, and natural communication, like his old letters; but it was four years later when I heard from him again as follows, in a letter which I will not withhold, in spite of what may be well regarded as its over-sensitiveness and somewhat exaggerated tone.

2643 Broadway, New York City,
Evening, March 20th, 1907.

My dear Kinsman, — Although I have given you no reason to be assured of it, you are still just the same to me in my honor and affection — you are never, and you never have been, otherwise in my thoughts than my kinsman (by your first recognition of our consanguinity) and my friend; yes, and early teacher, for I long ago told you that it was your essays that confirmed me, in my youth, in the course I chose for myself.

I am going on to Aldrich's funeral, and with a rather lone and heavy heart, since I began life here in New York with him before the Civil War, and had every expectation that he would survive

me: not wholly on the score of my seniority, but because I have had my "three calls" and more, and because he has ever been so strong and young and debonair. Health, happiness, ease, travel, all "things *waregan*," seemed his natural right. If I, too, wished for a portion of his felicities, I never envied one to whom they came by the very fitness of things. And I grieve the more for his death, because it seems to violate that fitness.

Now, I can't think of meeting you on Friday without first making this poor and inadequate attempt to set one thing right. Your latest letter — I *was*, at least, moved by it to address myself at once to a full reply, but was myself attacked that day so sorely by the grippe that I went to bed before completing it and was useless for weeks; the letter showed me that you thought, as well you might, that I had been hurt or vexed by something you had unwittingly done or written. I can say little to-night but to confess that no act, word, or writing, of yours from first to last has not seemed to contain all the friendship, kindness, recognition, that I could ever ask for. . . . Perhaps I have the ancestral infirmity of clinging to my fealties for good and all; but, as I say, you are my creditor in every way, and I constantly find myself in sympathy with your writings, beliefs, causes, judgments. — Now I recall it, the very choice you made of a little lyric of mine as the one at my "high-water" mark gave me a fine sense of your comprehension — it seemed to me a case of *rem acu tetigit*. I am thoroughly satisfied

to have one man — and that man *you* — so quick to see just where I felt that I had been fortunate. . . .

For some years, I venture to remind you, you have seen scarcely anything of mine in print. Since 1900 I have had three long and disabling illnesses, from two of which it was not thought I could recover. Between these, what desperate failure of efforts to "catch up." Oh, I can't tell you, the books, the letters, the debts, the broken contracts. Then the deaths of my wife and my son, and all the sorrows following; the break-up of my home, and the labor of winding up so much without aid. But from all the rack I have always kept, separated on my table, all your letters and remembrances — each one adding more, in my mind, to the explanation I had *not* written you. . . .

Your attached kinsman and friend,

EDMUND C. STEDMAN.

Stedman came from Mount Auburn to my house after the funeral of Aldrich, with a look of utter exhaustion on his face such as alarmed me. A little rest and refreshment brought him to a curious revival of strength and animation; he talked of books, men, and adventures, in what was almost a monologue, and went away in comparative cheerfulness with his faithful literary associate, Professor George E. Woodberry. Yet I always associate him with one of those touching letters which he wrote to me

before the age of the typewriter, more profusely than men now write, and the very fact that we lived far apart made him franker in utterance. The following letter came from Keep Rock, New Castle, New Hampshire, September 30, 1887:—

"You are a 'noble kinsman' after all, of the sort from whom one is very glad to get good words, and I have taken your perception of a bit of verse as infallible, ever since you picked out three little 'Stanzas for Music' as my one best thing. Every one else had overlooked them, but I knew that — as Holmes said of his 'Chambered Nautilus' — they were written 'better than I could.' By the way, if you will overhaul Duyckinck's 'Encyclopedia of Literature' *in re* Dr. Samuel Mitchill, you will see who first wrote crudely the 'Chambered Nautilus.'"

Two years after, he wrote, April 9, 1889:—

"The newspapers warn me that you are soon to go abroad. . . . I must copy for you now the song which you have kindly remembered so many years. In sooth, I have always thought well of your judgment as to poetry, since you intimated (in 'The Commonwealth,' was it not?) that these three stanzas of mine were the thing worth having of my seldom-written verse. I will write on the next page a passage which I lately found in Hartmann (a wonderful man for a pessimist), and which conveys precisely the idea of my song."

To this he adds as a quotation the passage itself: —

"The souls which are near without knowing it, and which can approach no nearer by ever so close an embrace than they eternally are, pine for a blending which can never be theirs so long as they remain distinct individuals."

The song itself, which he thought, as I did, his high-water mark, here follows. Its closing verse appears to me unsurpassed in American literature.

### STANZAS FOR MUSIC

(From an Unfinished Drama)

Thou art mine, thou hast given thy word;
Close, close in my arms thou art clinging;
Alone for my ear thou art singing
A song which no stranger hath heard:
But afar from me yet, like a bird,
Thy soul, in some region unstirred,
On its mystical circuit is winging.

Thou art mine, I have made thee mine own;
Henceforth we are mingled forever:
But in vain, all in vain, I endeavor —
Though round thee my garlands are thrown,
And thou yieldest thy lips and thy zone —
To master the spell that alone
My hold on thy being can sever.

Thou art mine, thou hast come unto me!
  But thy soul, when I strive to be near it —
  The innermost fold of thy spirit —
Is as far from my grasp, is as free,
As the stars from the mountain-tops be,
As the pearl, in the depths of the sea,
  From the portionless king that would wear it.

# XII

# EDWARD EVERETT HALE

# EDWARD EVERETT HALE

The life of Edward Everett Hale has about it a peculiar interest as a subject of study. The youngest member of his Harvard class, — that of 1839, — he was also the most distinguished among them and finally outlived them all. Personal characteristics which marked him when a freshman in college kept him young to the end of his days. When the Reverend Edward Cummings came to Dr. Hale's assistance in the South Congregational Church, he was surprised to find practically no young people in the parish, and still more surprised to know that their pastor was ignorant of the fact. These parishioners were all young when Dr. Hale took them in charge, and to him they had always remained so, for he had invested them with his own fresh and undying spirit.

Probably no man in America, except Beecher, aroused and stimulated quite so many minds as Hale, and his personal popularity was unbounded. He had strokes of genius, sometimes with unsatisfying results; yet failures never stood in his way, but seemed to drop from his memory in a few hours. An unsurpassable

model in most respects, there were limitations which made him in some minor ways a less trustworthy example. Such and so curiously composed was Edward Everett Hale. He was the second son of a large family of sons and daughters, his parents being Nathan and Sarah Preston (Everett) Hale, and he was born in Boston, April 3, 1822. His father was the editor of the leading newspaper in Boston, the "Daily Advertiser," and most of his children developed, in one way or another, distinct literary tastes. The subject of this sketch had before him, as a literary example and influence, the celebrated statesman and orator whose name he bore, and who was his mother's brother.

My own recollections of him begin quite early. Nearly two years younger than he, I was, like him, the youngest of my Harvard class, which was two years later than his. My college remembrances of him are vivid and characteristic. Living outside of the college yard, I was sometimes very nearly late for morning prayers; and more than once on such occasions, as I passed beneath the walls of Massachusetts Hall, then a dormitory, there would spring from the doorway a tall, slim young student who had, according to current report among the freshmen, sprung out of bed almost at the last stroke of the bell, thrown his clothes over

the stairway, and jumped into them on the way down. This was Edward Everett Hale; and this early vision was brought to my mind not infrequently in later life by his way of doing maturer things.

The same qualities which marked his personal appearance marked his career. He was always ready for action, never stopped for trifles, always lacked but little of being one of the heroes or men of genius of his time. Nor can any one yet predict which of these will be the form finally taken by his fame. His capacity for work was unlimited, and he perhaps belonged to more societies and committees than any man living. In this field his exhaustless energy had play, but his impetuous temperament often proved a drawback, and brought upon him the criticism of men of less talent but more accurate habits of mind. No denominational barriers existed for him. Ready to officiate in all pulpits and welcome in all, he left it unknown to the end of his life whether he did or did not believe in the Bible miracles, for instance. Nor did anybody who talked with him care much. His peculiar and attractive personality made him acceptable to all sorts of people and to men of all creeds; for his extraordinary versatility enabled him in his intercourse with other minds to adapt his sympathy and his language to the

individual modes of thought and belief of each and all of them.

Some of his finest literary achievements were those which he himself had forgotten. Up to the last degree prolific, he left more than one absolutely triumphant stroke behind him in literature. The best bit of prose that I can possibly associate with him was a sketch in a newspaper bearing the somewhat meaningless title "The Last Shake," suggested by watching the withdrawal of the last man with a hand-cart who was ever allowed to shake carpets on Boston Common. He was, no doubt, a dusty and forlorn figure enough. But to Hale's ready imagination he stood for a whole epoch of history, for the long procession of carpet-shakers who were doing their duty there when Percy marched to Lexington, or when the cannonade from Breed's Hill was in the air. Summer and winter had come and gone, sons had succeeded their fathers at their work, and the beating of the carpets had gone on, undrowned by the rising city's roar. At last the more fastidious aldermen rebelled, the last shake was given, and Edward Everett Hale wrote its elegy. I suppose I kept the little newspaper cutting on my desk for five years, as a model of what wit and sympathy could extract from the humblest theme.

Another stroke was of quite a different char-

acter. Out of the myriad translations of Homer, there is in all English literature but one version known to me of even a single passage which gives in a high degree the Homeric flavor. That passage is the description of the Descent of Neptune (Iliad, Book XIII), and was preserved in Hale's handwriting by his friend Samuel Longfellow, with whom I edited the book "Thalatta," — a collection of sea poems. His classmate, Hale, had given it to him when first written, and then had forgotten all about it. Had it not been printed by us there, it might, sooner or later, have found its way into that still unpublished magazine which Hale and I planned together, when we lived near each other in Worcester, Massachusetts, — a periodical which was to have been called the "Unfortunates' Magazine," and was to contain all the prose and verse sent to us by neighbors or strangers with request to get it published. I remember that we made out a title-page between us, with a table of contents, all genuine, for the imaginary first number. Such a book was to some extent made real in "Thalatta," and the following is Hale's brilliant Homeric translation: —

THE DESCENT OF NEPTUNE

There sat he high retired from the seas;
There looked with pity on his Grecians beaten;

There burned with rage at the God-king who slew
them.
Then rushed he forward from the rugged mountain;
He beat the forest also as he came downward,
And the high cliffs shook underneath his footsteps;
Three times he trod, his fourth step reached his sea-
home.

There was his palace in the deep sea-water,
Shining with gold and builded firm forever;
And there he yoked him his swift-footed horses
(Their hoofs are brazen, and their manes are golden)
With golden thongs; his golden goad he seizes;
He mounts upon his chariot and doth fly;
Yea, drives he forth his steeds into the billows.

The sea-beasts from the depths rise under him —
They know their King: and the glad sea is parted,
That so his wheels may fly along unhinder'd.
Dry speeds between the waves his brazen axle: —
So bounding fast they bring him to his Grecians.

Earlier than this, in his racy papers called "My College Days," we get another characteristic glimpse of Hale as a student. The Sunday afternoon before being examined for admission to college, he reports that he read the first six books of the Æneid (the last six having already been mastered) at one fell swoop, — seated meantime on the ridge-pole of his father's house!

More firmly than on any of these productions

Hale's literary fame now rests on an anonymous study in the "Atlantic Monthly," called "The Man without a Country," a sketch of such absolutely lifelike vigor that I, reading it in camp during the Civil War, accepted it as an absolutely true narrative, until I suddenly came across, in the very midst of it, a phrase so wholly characteristic of its author that I sprang from my seat, exclaiming "*Aut Cæsar aut nullus;* Edward Hale or nobody." This is the story on which the late eminent critic, Wendell P. Garrison, of the "Nation," once wrote (April 17, 1902), "There are some who look upon it as the primer of Jingoism," and he wrote to me ten years earlier, February 19, 1892, "What will last of Hale, I apprehend, will be the phrase 'A man without a country,' and perhaps the immoral doctrine taught in it which leads to Mexican and Chilean wars — 'My country, right or wrong.'"

Be this as it may, there is no doubt that on this field Hale's permanent literary fame was won. It hangs to that as securely as does the memory of Dr. Holmes to his "Chambered Nautilus." It is the exiled hero of this story who gives that striking bit of advice to boys: "And if you are ever tempted to say a word or do a thing that shall put a bar between you and your family, your home and your country, pray

God in his mercy to take you that instant home to his own heaven!"

President James Walker, always the keenest of observers, once said of Hale that he took sides upon every question while it was being stated. This doubtless came, in part at least, from his having been reared in a newspaper office, or, as he said more tersely, having been "cradled in the sheets of the 'Advertiser,'" and bred to strike promptly. His strongest and weakest points seem to have been developed in his father's editorial office. Always ready to give unselfish sympathy, he could not always dispense deliberate justice. One of his favorite sayings was that his ideal of a committee was one which consisted of three persons, one of whom should be in bed with chronic illness, another should be in Europe, and he himself should be the third. It was one of his theories that clergymen were made to do small duties neglected by others, and he did them at a formidable sacrifice of time and in his own independent and quite ungovernable way. Taking active part for the Nation during the Civil War, — so active that his likeness appears on the Soldiers' Monument on Boston Common, — he did not actually go to the war itself as chaplain of a regiment, as some of his friends desired; for they justly considered him one of the few

men qualified to fill that position heartily, through his powerful voice, ready sympathy, and boundless willingness to make himself useful in every direction.

A very characteristic side of the man might always be seen in his letters. The following was written in his own hurried handwriting in recognition of his seventy-seventh birthday : —

April 8, '99.

DEAR HIGGINSON, — Thanks for your card. It awaited me on my return from North Carolina last night.

Three score & ten as you know, has many advantages, — and as yet, I find no drawbacks.

Asa Gray said to me "It is great fun to be 70 years old. You do not have to know everything!"

I see that you can write intelligibly.

I wish I could — But I cannot run a Typewriter more than a Sewing-Machine.

Will the next generation learn to write — any more than learn the alphabet?

With Love to all yours

Truly & always E E HALE.

This next letter was called out by the death of Major-General Rufus Saxton, distinguished for his first arming of the freed slaves : —

WASHINGTON, D. C., Feb. 29, 1908.

DEAR HIGGINSON, — I have been reading with the greatest interest your article on Gen. Saxton.

It has reminded me of an incident here — the time of which I cannot place. But I think you can; — and if you can I wish you would write & tell me when it happened — and perhaps what came of it.

I was coming up in a street [car] when Charles Sumner came in & took a seat opposite me — The car was not crowded.

Every one knew him, and he really addressed the whole car — though he affected to speak to me. But he meant to have every one hear — & they did. He said substantially this, —

"The most important order since the war began has been issued at the War Department this morning.

"Directions have been given for the manufacture of a thousand pair of Red Breeches. They are to be patterned on the Red Trousers of the Zouaves — and are to be the uniform of the First Negro Regiment." He surprised the car — (as he meant to).

Now, 1. I cannot fix the date, can you?

2. Were the negro troops or any regiment of them ever clothed in the Zouave Uniform?

I remember there was a "Zouave" Regiment from New York City —

[I had the pleasure of informing him that my regiment, which he mentions, had been the only one disfigured by the scarlet trousers, which were fortunately very soon worn out and gladly banished. This was in August, 1862.]

It may be well enough to end these extracts from his correspondence with one of those bits

of pure nonsense in which his impetuous nature delighted. This was on occasion of his joining the Boston Authors' Club: —

ROXBURY, Mass., April 10, 1903.

DEAR HIGGINSON, — One sometimes does what there is no need of doing. What we call here a Duke of Northumberland day is a day when one does what he darn chooses to do, without reference to the obligations of the social order. Such is to-day.

Did you ever hear the story of the graduate who never advanced in his studies farther than that Pythagorean man did who never could learn more than the first letters of the alphabet? I am reminded of it by the elegant monogram of our Club.

This young fellow's friends were very eager to get him through the university, so they sent him out from Boston in a

C A B

After two days he came

B A C

He then went to Cambridge on a three years' course by taking electives which did n't require him to repeat the alphabet.

He learned to smoke

B A C C A

and at the end of the time the College made him

A B

His friends then sent him to the Cuban War, and

he came out a Field Marshal, so that he was able to become a member of the

A B C F M

This was all I knew about him till this morning I have learned that after publishing his military memoirs hè became a member of the

B A C

[Boston Authors' Club]

I am sorry to say that he already drank the Lager which was furnished him by the AMERICAN BOTTLING COMPANY

So no more at present from your old companion in arms,

Edward E Hale

A B 1839.

These letters give a glimpse at the more impetuous and sunny aspects of his life. Turning again to its severer duties, it is interesting to notice that in conducting the funeral services of Mr. F. A. Hill, the Secretary of the State Board of Education, Dr. Hale said in warm praise of that able man: "He lived by the spirit; I do not think he cared for method." The same was Hale's own theory also, or, at any rate, his familiar practice. He believed, for instance, that the school hours of a city should be very much shortened, yet never made it clear what pursuits should take their places; for it was the habit of his fertile brain to for-

mulate schemes and allow others to work them out. Many of his suggestions fell to the ground, but others bore rich fruit. Among these latter are the various "Lend a Hand" clubs which have sprung up all over the country, not confining themselves to sect or creed, and having as their motto a brief verse of his writing. He went to no divinity school to prepare himself for preaching, and at one time did not see clearly the necessity of preliminary training for those who were to enter the pulpit. If his friends undertook laboriously to correct any inaccuracies in his published writings, he took every such correction with imperturbable and sunny equanimity, and, taxed with error, readily admitted it. His undeniable habit of rather hasty and inaccurate statement sprang from his way of using facts simply as illustrations. They served to prove his point or exemplify the principle for which he was contending. To verify his statements would often have taken too much time, and from his point of view was immaterial. It is hard for the academic mind, with its love of system, to accept this method of working, and his contemporaries sometimes regretted that he could not act with them in more business-like ways. They were tempted to compare his aims and methods to those of Eskimo dogs, each of which has to be har-

nessed separately to the sledge which bears the driver, or else they turn and eat each other up. When it came to the point, all of yesterday's shortcomings were forgotten next morning by him and every one else, in his readiness to be the world's errand-boy for little kindnesses. But in the presence, we will not say of death, but of a life lived for others, which is deathless, the critic's task seems ungenerous and unmeaning. This man's busy existence may not always have run in the accepted grooves, but its prevailing note was Love. If the rushing stream sometimes broke down the barriers of safety, it proved more often a fertilizing Nile than a dangerous Mississippi.

Followed and imitated by multitudes, justly beloved for his warmth of heart and readiness of hand, he had a happy and busy life, sure to win gratitude and affection when it ended, as it did at Roxbury on June 10, 1909. The children and the aged loved him almost to worshiping, and is there, after all, a better test?

# XIII

# A MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL, RUFUS SAXTON

# A MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL, RUFUS SAXTON

COMPLAINT has sometimes been made of Massachusetts that the state did not provide a sufficient number of officers of high grade for the regular army during the Civil War. Be that as it may, one of the most eminent of such officers has just died, being indeed one whose actual fame may yet outlast that of all the others by reason of its rare mingling of civil and military service.

General Rufus Saxton was born at Greenfield, Massachusetts, on October 19, 1824, graduated at the military academy in 1849, was made brevet second lieutenant, Third United States Artillery, July 1, 1849, second lieutenant, Fourth Artillery, September 12, 1850, and captain and assistant quartermaster, May 13, 1861. He was chief quartermaster on the staff of General Lyon in Missouri and subsequently on that of General McClellan in western Virginia, and was on the expeditionary corps to Port Royal, South Carolina. In May and June, 1862, he was ordered north and placed in command of the defenses at Harper's Ferry, where his services won him a medal of honor; after which he was military

governor of the Department of the South, his headquarters being at Beaufort, South Carolina; this service extended from July, 1862, to May 18, 1865, when he rose to be colonel and brevet brigadier-general of volunteers. He was mustered out of the volunteer service January 15, 1866, but rose finally to be colonel and assistant quartermaster-general in the regular army, March 10, 1882. He retired from active service October 19, 1888, having been made on that date a brigadier-general on the retired list. This is the brief summary of what was, in reality, a quite unique career.

The portion of this honorable life upon which his personal fame will doubtless be founded is that from 1862 to 1865, when he was military governor of the Department of the South. In this capacity he first proved possible the distribution of the vast body of free or fugitive slaves over the Sea Islands, which had been almost deserted by their white predecessors. This feat was accompanied by what was probably in the end even more important, — the creation of black troops from that centre. The leadership in this work might have belonged under other circumstances to Major-General Hunter, of Washington, District of Columbia, who had undertaken such a task in the same region (May 3, 1862); but General Hunter, though he had many fine

qualities, was a thoroughly impetuous man; whimsical, changeable, and easily influenced by his staff officers, few of whom had the slightest faith in the enterprise. He acted, moreover, without authority from Washington, and his whole enterprise had been soon disallowed by the United States government. This was the position of things when General Saxton, availing himself of the fact that one company of this Hunter regiment had not, like the rest, been practically disbanded, made that the basis of a reorganization of it under the same name (First South Carolina Infantry). This was done under express authority from the War Department, dated August 25, 1862, with the hope of making it a pioneer of a whole subsequent series of slave regiments, as it was. The fact that General Saxton was a Massachusetts man, as was the colonel whom he put in charge of the first regiment, — and as were, indeed, most of the men prominent from beginning to end in the enlistment of colored troops, — gave an unquestioned priority in the matter to that state.

It must be remembered that this was long before Governor Andrew had received permission to recruit a colored regiment, the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts, whose first colonel was Robert Gould Shaw, a young hero of Boston birth. The fact that this was the first black regi-

ment enlisted at the North has left a general impression in Massachusetts that it was the first colored regiment; but this is an error of five months, General Saxton's authority having been dated August 25, 1862, and that of Governor Andrew January 26, 1863. The whole number of black soldiers enlisted during the war was 178,975 (Heitman's "Historical Register," page 890), whose whole organization may fairly be attributed, in a general way, to the success of General Saxton's undertaking. In making this claim, it must be borne in mind that the enlistments made by General Butler at almost precisely the same time in New Orleans consisted mainly of a quite exceptional class, the comparatively educated free colored men of that region, the darkest of these being, as General Butler himself once said, "of about the same complexion as the late Daniel Webster." Those New Orleans regiments would hardly have led to organizing similar troops elsewhere, for want of similar material. Be this as it may, the fact is that these South Carolina regiments, after their number was increased by other colored regiments from various sources, were unquestionably those who held the South Carolina coast, making it possible for Sherman to lead his final march to the sea and thus practically end the war. As an outcome of all this,

General Saxton's name is quite sure to be long remembered.

It is fair now to recognize the fact that this combination of civil and military authority was not always what Saxton himself would have selected. There were times when he chafed under what seemed to him a non-military work and longed for the open field. It is perhaps characteristic of his temperament, however, that at the outset he preferred to be where the greatest obstacles were to be encountered, and this he certainly achieved. It must be remembered that the early organizers and officers of the colored troops fought in a manner with ropes around their necks, both they and their black recruits having been expressly denied by the Confederate government the usual privileges of soldiers. They had also to encounter for a long time the disapproval of many officers of high rank in the Union army, both regular and volunteer, this often leading to a grudging bestowal of supplies (especially, strange to say, of medical ones), and to a disproportionate share of fatigue duty. This was hard indeed for Saxton to bear, and was increased in his case by the fact that he had been almost the only cadet in his time at West Point who was strong in anti-slavery feeling, and who thus began with antagonisms which lasted into actual

service. To these things he was perhaps oversensitive, and he had to be defended against this tendency, as he was, by an admirable wife and by an invaluable staff officer and housemate, Brevet Major Edward W. Hooper, of Massachusetts, who was his volunteer aide-de-camp and housemate. The latter was, as many Bostonians will remember, of splendid executive ability, as shown by his long subsequent service as steward and treasurer of Harvard University; a man of rare organizing power, and of a cheerfulness which made him only laugh away dozens of grievances that vexed General Saxton.

As an organizer of troops General Saxton's standard was very high, and he assumed, as was proper, that a regiment made out of former slaves should not merely follow good moral examples, but set them. As all men in that day knew, there was a formidable variation in this respect in different regiments, some of the volunteer officers whose military standard was the highest being the lowest in their personal habits. General Saxton would issue special orders from time to time to maintain a high tone morally in the camp, as he did, indeed, in the whole region under his command. He was never in entire harmony with General Gillmore, the military commander of the department, whose interest was thought to lie chiefly in the artillery ser-

vice; and while very zealous and efficient in organizing special expeditions for his own particular regiments, Saxton kept up, as we thought at the time, a caution beyond what was necessary in protecting the few colored regiments which he had personally organized. When the Florida expedition was planned, which resulted in the sanguinary defeat at Olustee, he heartily disapproved of the whole affair. This he carried so far that when my own regiment was ordered on the expedition, as we all greatly desired, when we had actually broken camp and marched down to the wharf for embarkment in high exultation, we were stopped and turned back by an order, just obtained by General Saxton from headquarters, countermanding our march and sending us back to pitch our tents again. It was not until some days later had brought the news of the disastrous battle, and how defective was the judgment of those who planned it, that General Saxton found himself vindicated in our eyes. The plain reason for that defeat was that the Confederates, being on the mainland and having railway communications, such as they were, could easily double from the interior any force sent round by water outside. This was just what had been pointed out beforehand by General Saxton, but his judgment had been overruled.

General Saxton was a man of fine military bearing and a most kindly and agreeable face. Social in his habits, he was able to go about freely for the rest of his life in the pleasant circle of retired military men and their families in Washington. He and his wife had always the dream of retiring from the greater gayety of the national metropolis to a calm retreat at Deerfield, Massachusetts. Going there one beautiful day in early summer, with that thought in mind, they sat, so he told me, on the peaceful piazza all the morning and looked out down the avenue of magnificent elms which shade that most picturesque of village streets. During the whole morning no wheels passed their place, except those belonging to a single country farmer's wagon. Finding the solitude to be somewhat of a change after the vivacity of Washington, they decided to go down to Greenfield and pass the afternoon. There they sat on a hotel piazza under somewhat similar circumstances and saw only farmers' wagons, two or three. Disappointed in the reconnoissance, they went back to Washington, and spent the rest of their days amid a happy and congenial circle of friends. He died there February 23, 1908. To the present writer, at least, the world seems unquestionably more vacant that Saxton is gone.

# XIV

# ONE OF THACKERAY'S WOMEN

# ONE OF THACKERAY'S WOMEN

SOME years since, there passed away, at Newport, Rhode Island, one who could justly be classed with Thackeray's women; one in whom Lady Kew would have taken delight; one in whom she would have found wit and memory and audacity rivaling her own; one who was at once old and young, poor and luxurious, one of the loneliest of human beings, and yet one of the most sociable. Miss Jane Stuart, the only surviving daughter of Gilbert Stuart, the painter, had dwelt all her life on the edge of art without being an artist, and at the brink of fashion without being fashionable. Living at times in something that approached poverty, she was usually surrounded by friends who were rich and generous; so that she often fulfilled Motley's famous early saying, that one could do without the necessaries of life, but could not spare the luxuries. She was an essential part of the atmosphere of Newport; living near the "Old Stone Mill," she divided its celebrity and, as all agreed, its doubtful antiquity; for her most intimate friends could not really guess within fifteen years how old she was, and

strangers placed her anywhere from sixty to eighty. Her modest cottage, full of old furniture and pictures, was the resort of much that was fashionable on the days of her weekly receptions; costly equipages might be seen before the door; and if, during any particular season, she suspected a falling off in visitors, she would try some new device, — a beautiful girl sitting in a certain carved armchair beneath an emblazoned window, like Keats's Madeline, — or, when things grew desperate, a bench with a milk-pan and a pumpkin on the piazza, to give an innocently rural air. "My dear," she said on that occasion, "I must try something: rusticity is the dodge for me"; and so the piazza looked that summer like a transformation scene in "Cinderella," with the fairy godmother not far off.

She inherited from her father in full the Bohemian temperament, and cultivated it so habitually through life that it was in full flower at a time when almost any other woman would have been repressed by age, poverty, and loneliness. At seventy or more she was still a born mistress of the revels, and could not be for five minutes in a house where a charade or a mask was going on without tapping at the most private door and plaintively imploring to be taken in as one of the conspirators. Once in, there

was nothing too daring, too grotesque, or too juvenile for her to accept as her part, and successfully. In the modest winter sports of the narrowed Newport circle, when wit and ingenuity had to be invoked to replace the summer resources of wealth and display, she was an indispensable factor. She had been known to enact a Proud Sister in "Cinderella," to be the performer on the penny whistle in the "Children's Symphony," to march as the drum major of the Ku-Klux Klan with a muff for a shako, and to be the gorilla of a menagerie, with an artificial head. Nothing could make too great a demand upon her wit and vivacity, and her very face had a droll plainness more effective for histrionic purposes than a Grecian profile. She never lost dignity in these performances, for she never had anything that could exactly be described by that name; that was not her style. She had in its stead a supply of common sense and ready adaptation that took the place, when needed, of all starched decorum, and quite enabled her on serious occasions to hold her own.

But her social resources were not confined to occasions where she was one of an extemporized troupe: she was a host in herself; she had known everybody; her memory held the adventures and scandals of a generation, and these

lost nothing on her lips. Then when other resources were exhausted, and the candles had burned down, and the fire was low, and a few guests lingered, somebody would be sure to say, "Now, Miss Jane, tell us a ghost story." With a little, a very little, of coy reluctance, she would begin, in a voice at first commonplace, but presently dropping to a sort of mystic tone; she seemed to undergo a change like the gypsy queen in Browning's "Flight of the Duchess"; she was no longer a plain, elderly woman in an economical gown, but she became a medium, a solemn weaver of spells so deep that they appeared to enchant herself. Whence came her stories, I wonder? not ghost stories alone, but blood-curdling murders and midnight terrors, of which she abated you not an item, — for she was never squeamish, — tales that all the police records could hardly match. Then, when she and her auditors were wrought up to the highest pitch, she began to tell fortunes; and here also she seemed not so much a performer as one performed upon, — a Delphic priestess, a Cassandra. I never shall forget how she once made our blood run cold with the visions of coming danger that she conjured around a young married woman on whom there soon afterwards broke a wholly unexpected scandal that left her an exile in a foreign land. No one ever knew, I

believe, whether Miss Stuart spoke at that time with knowledge; perhaps she hardly knew herself; she always was, or affected to be, carried away beyond herself by these weird incantations.

She was not so much to be called affectionate or lovable as good-natured and kindly; and with an undisguised relish for the comfortable things of this world, and a very frank liking for the society of the rich and great, she was yet constant, after a fashion, to humbler friends, and liked to do them good turns. Much of her amiability took the form of flattery, — a flattery so habitual that it lost all its grossness, and became almost a form of good deeds. She was sometimes justly accused of applying this to the wealthy and influential, but it was almost as freely exercised where she had nothing to gain by it; and it gave to the humblest the feeling that he was at least worth flattering. Even if he had a secret fear that what she said of him behind his back might be less encouraging, no matter: it was something to have been praised to his face. It must be owned that her resources in the other direction were considerable, and Lord Steyne himself might have applauded when she was gradually led into mimicking some rich amateur who had pooh-poohed her pictures, or some intrusive dame who had pat-

ronizingly inspected her humble cot. It could not quite be said of her that her wit lived to play, not wound; and yet, after all, what she got out of life was so moderate, and so many women would have found her way of existence dreary enough, that it was impossible to grudge her these trifling indulgences.

Inheriting her father's love of the brush, she had little of his talent; her portraits of friends were generally transferred by degrees to dark corners; but there existed an impression that she was a good copyist of Stuart's pictures, and she was at one time a familiar figure in Boston, perched on a high stool, and copying those of his works which were transferred for safe-keeping from Faneuil Hall to the Art Museum. On one occasion, it was said, she grew tired of the long process of copying and took home a canvas or two with the eyes unpainted, putting them in, colored to please her own fancy, at Newport. Perhaps she invented this legend for her own amusement, for she never spared herself, and, were she to read this poor sketch of her, would object to nothing but the tameness of its outlines.

# XV

# JOHN BARTLETT

# JOHN BARTLETT

In every university town such as Cambridge, Massachusetts, there is an outside circle, beyond the institution itself, of cultivated men who may or may not hold its degrees, but who contribute to the intellectual atmosphere. One of the most widely known and generally useful of these at Cambridge — whether in his active youth or in the patient and lonely seclusion of his later years — was John Bartlett, best known as the author of the dictionary entitled "Familiar Quotations."

He was born in Plymouth, June 14, 1820, was educated in the public schools of that town, and in 1836 entered the bookbinding establishment connected with the University bookstore in Cambridge, under John Owen, who was Longfellow's first publisher. In the next year Bartlett became a clerk in the bookstore, and soon showed remarkable talent for the business. In 1846 Mr. Owen failed, and Bartlett remained with his successor, George Nichols, but became himself the proprietor in 1849. He had shown himself in this position an uncommonly good publisher and adviser of authors.

He had there published three editions of his "Familiar Quotations," gradually enlarging the book from the beginning. In 1859 he sold out to Sever & Francis. In 1862 he served as volunteer naval paymaster for nine months with Captain Boutelle, his brother-in-law, on board Admiral DuPont's dispatch-boat. In August, 1863, he entered the publishing house of Little, Brown & Co., nominally as clerk, but with the promise that in eighteen months, when the existing partnership would end, he should be taken into the firm, which accordingly took place in 1865. The fourth edition of his "Familiar Quotations," always growing larger, had meanwhile been published by them, as well as an *édition de luxe* of Walton's "Complete Angler," in the preparation of which he made an especial and exceptionally fine collection of works on angling, which he afterwards presented to the Harvard College Library. His activity in the Waltonian sport is also commemorated in Lowell's poem, "To Mr. John Bartlett, who had sent me a seven-pound trout." He gave to the Library at the same time another collection of books containing "Proverbs," and still another on "Emblems."

After his becoming partner in the firm, the literary, manufacturing, and advertising departments were assigned to him, and were retained

until he withdrew altogether. The fifth and sixth editions of his "Quotations" were published by Little, Brown & Co., the seventh and eighth by Routledge of London, the ninth by Little, Brown & Co. and Macmillan & Co. of London, jointly; and of all these editions between two and three hundred thousand copies must have been sold. Of the seventh and eighth editions, as the author himself tells us, forty thousand copies were printed apart from the English reprint. The ninth edition, published in 1891, had three hundred and fifty pages more than its predecessor, and the index was increased by more than ten thousand lines. In 1881 Mr. Bartlett published his Shakespeare "Phrase-Book," and in February, 1889, he retired from his firm to complete his indispensable Shakespeare "Concordance," which Macmillan & Co. published at their own risk in London in 1894.

All this immense literary work had the direct support and coöperation of Mr. Bartlett's wife, who was the daughter of Sidney Willard, professor of Hebrew in Harvard University, and granddaughter of Joseph Willard, President of Harvard from 1781 to 1804. She inherited from such an ancestry the love of studious labor; and as they had no children, she and her husband could pursue it with the greatest regular-

ity. Both of them had also been great readers for many years, and there is still extant a manuscript book of John Bartlett's which surpasses most books to be found in these days, for it contains the life-long record of his reading. What man or woman now living, for instance, can claim to have read Gibbon's "Decline and Fall" faithfully through, four times, from beginning to end? We must, however, remember that this was accomplished by one who began by reading a verse of the Bible aloud to his mother when he was but three years old, and had gone through the whole of it at nine.

There came an event in Bartlett's life, however, which put an end to all direct labors, when his wife and co-worker began to lose her mental clearness, and all this joint task had presently to be laid aside. For a time he tried to continue his work unaided; and she, with unwearied patience and gentleness, would sit quietly beside him without interference. But the malady increased, until she passed into that melancholy condition described so powerfully by his neighbor and intimate friend, James Russell Lowell, — though drawing from a different example, — in his poem of "The Darkened Mind," one of the most impressive, I think, of his poems. While Bartlett still continued his habit of reading, the writing had to be surrendered. His

eyesight being erelong affected, the reading also was abandoned, and after his wife's death he lived for a year or two one of the loneliest of lives. He grew physically lame, and could scarcely cross the room unaided. A nervous trouble in the head left him able to employ a reader less and less frequently, and finally not at all. In a large and homelike parlor, containing one of the most charming private libraries in Cambridge, — the books being beautifully bound and lighting up the walls instead of darkening them, — he spent most of the day reclining on the sofa, externally unemployed, simply because employment was impossible. He had occasional visitors, and four of his old friends formed what they called a "Bartlett Club," meeting at his house one evening in every week. Sometimes days passed, however, without his receiving a visitor, he living alone in a room once gay with the whist-parties which he and Lowell had formerly organized and carried on.

His cheerful courage, however, was absolutely unbroken, and he came forward to meet every guest with a look of sunshine. His voice and manner, always animated and cheerful, remained the same. He had an inexhaustible store of anecdotes and reminiscences, and could fill the hour with talk without showing exhaustion. Seldom going out of the house, unable to take

more than very short drives, he dwelt absolutely in the past, remembered the ways and deeds of all Cambridge and Boston literary men, speaking genially of all and with malice of none. He had an endless fund of good stories of personal experience. Were one to speak to him, for instance, of Edward Everett, well known for the elaboration with which he prepared his addresses, Bartlett would instantly recall how Everett once came into his bookstore in search of a small pocket Bible to be produced dramatically before a rural audience in a lecture; but in this case finding none small enough, he chose a copy of Hoyle's "Games" instead, which was produced with due impressiveness when the time came. Then he would describe the same Edward Everett, whom he once called upon and found busy in drilling a few Revolutionary soldiers who were to be on the platform during Everett's famous Concord oration. These he had drilled first to stand up and be admired at a certain point of the oration, and then to sit down again, by signal, that the audience might rather rise in their honor. Unfortunately, one man, who was totally deaf, forgot the instructions and absolutely refused to sit down, because the "squire" had told him to stand up. In a similar way, Bartlett's unimpaired memory held the whole circle of eminent men among whom

he had grown up from youth, and a casual visitor might infer from his cheery manner that these comrades had just left the room. During his last illness, mind and memory seemed equally unclouded until the very end, and almost the last words he spoke were a caution to his faithful nurse not to forget to pay the small sum due to a man who had been at work on his driveway, he naming the precise sum due in dollars and cents.

He died at Cambridge, Massachusetts, on the morning of December 3, 1905, aged eighty-five. Was his career, after all, more to be pitied or envied? He lived a life of prolonged and happy labor among the very choicest gems of human thought, and died with patient fortitude after all visible human joys had long been laid aside.

# XVI

## HORACE ELISHA SCUDDER

# HORACE ELISHA SCUDDER

It has been generally felt, I think, that no disrespect was shown to John Fiske, when the New York "Nation" headed its very discriminating sketch of him with the title "John Fiske, Popularizer"; and I should feel that I showed no discourtesy, but on the contrary, did honor to Horace Elisha Scudder, in describing him as Literary Workman. I know of no other man in America, perhaps, who so well deserved that honorable name; no one, that is, who, if he had a difficult piece of literary work to do, could be so absolutely relied upon to do it carefully and well. Whatever it was, — compiling, editing, arranging, translating, indexing, — his work was uniformly well done. Whether this is the highest form of literary distinction is not now the question. What other distinction he might have won if he had shown less of modesty or self-restraint, we can never know. It is true that his few thoroughly original volumes show something beyond what is described in the limited term, workmanship. But that he brought such workmanship up into the realm of art is as certain as that we may call the cabinet-maker of the Middle Ages an artist.

Mr. Scudder was born in Boston on October 16, 1838, the son of Charles and Sarah Lathrop (Coit) Scudder, and died at Cambridge, Massachusetts, on January 11, 1902. He was a graduate of Williams College, and after graduation went to New York, where he spent three years as a teacher. It was there that he wrote his first stories for children, entitled "Seven Little People and their Friends" (New York, 1862). After his father's death he returned to Boston, and thenceforward devoted himself almost wholly to literary pursuits. He prepared the "Life and Letters of David Coit Scudder," his brother, a missionary to India (New York, 1864); edited the "Riverside Magazine" for young people during its four years' existence (from 1867 to 1870); and published "Dream Children" and "Stories from My Attic." Becoming associated with Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, he edited for them the "Atlantic Monthly" from 1890 to 1898, preparing for it also that invaluable Index, so important to bibliographers; he also edited the "American Commonwealths" series, and two detached volumes, "American Poems" (1879) and "American Prose" (1880). He published also the "Bodley Books" (8 vols., Boston, 1875 to 1887); "The Dwellers in Five Sisters' Court" (1876); "Boston Town" (1881); "Life of Noah Webster" (1882); "A History of the

United States" for schools (1884); "Men and Letters" (1887); "Life of George Washington" (1889); "Literature in School" (1889); "Childhood in Literature and Art" (1894), besides various books of which he was the editor or compiler only. He was also for nearly six years (1877–82) a member of the Cambridge School Committee; for five years (1884–89) of the State Board of Education; for nine years (1889–98) of the Harvard University visiting committee in English literature; and was at the time of his death a trustee of Williams College, Wellesley College, and St. John's Theological School, these making all together a quarter of a century of almost uninterrupted and wholly unpaid public service in the cause of education. After May 28, 1889, he was a member of the American Academy, until his death. This is the simple record of a most useful and admirable life, filled more and more, as it went on, with gratuitous public services and disinterested acts for others.

As a literary workman, his nicety of method and regularity of life went beyond those of any man I have known. Working chiefly at home, he assigned in advance a certain number of hours daily as due to the firm for which he labored; and he then kept carefully the record of these hours, and if he took out a half hour for

his own private work, made it up. He had special work assigned by himself for a certain time before breakfast, an interval which he daily gave largely to the Greek Testament and at some periods to Homer, Thucydides, Herodotus, and Xenophon; working always with the original at hand and writing out translations or commentaries, always in the same exquisite handwriting and at first contained in small thin note-books, afterwards bound in substantial volumes, with morocco binding and proper lettering. All his writings were thus handsomely treated, and the shelves devoted to his own works, pamphlet or otherwise, were to the eye a very conservatory and flower garden of literature; or like a chamberful of children to whom even a frugal parent may allow himself the luxury of pretty clothes. All his literary arrangements were neat and perfect, and represented that other extreme from the celebrated collection of De Quincey in Dove Cottage at Grasmere, where that author had five thousand books, by his own statement, in a little room ten or twelve feet square; and his old housekeeper explained it to me as perfectly practicable "because he had no bookcases," but simply piled them against the walls, leaving here and there little gaps in which he put his money.

In the delicate and touching dedication of Scudder's chief work, "Men and Letters," to his friend Henry M. Alden, the well-known New York editor, he says: "In that former state of existence when we were poets, you wrote verses which I knew by heart and I read dreamy tales to you which you speculated over as if they were already classics. Then you bound your manuscript verses in a full blue calf volume and put it on the shelf, and I woke to find myself at the desk of a literary workman." Later, he says of himself, "Fortunately, I have been able for the most part to work out of the glare of publicity." Yet even to this modest phrase he adds acutely: "But there is always that something in us which whispers *I*, and after a while the anonymous critic becomes a little tired of listening to the whisper in his solitary cave, and is disposed to escape from it by coming out into the light even at the risk of blinking a little, and by suffering the ghostly voice to become articulate, though the sound startle him. One craves company for his thought, and is not quite content always to sit in the dark with his guests."

The work in which he best achieves the purpose last stated is undoubtedly the collection of papers called by the inexpressive phrase "Men and Letters"; a book whose title was perhaps a weight upon it, and which yet con-

tained some of the very best of American thought and criticism. It manifests even more than his "Life of Lowell" that faculty of keen summing up and epigrammatic condensation which became so marked in him that it was very visible, I am assured, even in the literary councils of his publishers, two members of which have told me that he often, after a long discussion, so summed up the whole situation in a sentence or two that he left them free to pass to something else. We see the same quality, for instance, in his "Men and Letters," in his papers on Dr. Mulford and Longfellow. The first is an analysis of the life and literary service of a man too little known because of early death, but of the rarest and most exquisite intellectual qualities, Dr. Elisha Mulford, author of "The Nation" and then of "The Republic of God." In this, as everywhere in the book, Mr. Scudder shows that epigrammatic quality which amounted, whether applied to books or men, to what may be best described as a quiet brilliancy. This is seen, for instance, when, in defending Mulford from the imputation of narrowness, his friend sums up the whole character of the man and saves a page of more detailed discussion by saying, "He was narrow as a cañon is narrow, when the depth apparently contracts the sides" (page 17). So in

his criticism called "Longfellow and his Art," Scudder repeatedly expresses in a sentence what might well have occupied a page, as where he says of Longfellow, "He was first of all a composer, and he saw his subjects in their relations rather than in their essence" (page 44). He is equally penetrating where he says that Longfellow "brought to his work in the college no special love of teaching," but "a deep love of literature and that unacademic attitude toward his work which was a liberalizing power" (page 66). He touches equally well that subtle quality of Longfellow's temperament, so difficult to delineate, when he says of him: "He gave of himself freely to his intimate friends, but he dwelt, nevertheless, in a charmed circle, beyond the lines of which men could not penetrate" (page 68). These admirable statements sufficiently indicate the rare quality of Mr. Scudder's work.

So far as especial passages go, Mr. Scudder never surpassed the best chapters of "Men and Letters," but his one adequate and complete work as a whole is undoubtedly, apart from his biographies, the volume entitled "Childhood in Literature and Art" (1894). This book was based on a course of Lowell lectures given by him in Boston, and is probably that by which he himself would wish to be judged, at least up to the time of his excellent biography of Lowell.

He deals in successive chapters with Greek, Roman, Hebrew, Mediæval, English, French, German, and American literary art with great symmetry and unity throughout, culminating, of course, in Hawthorne and analyzing the portraits of children drawn in his productions. In this book one may justly say that he has added himself, in a degree, to the immediate circle of those very few American writers whom he commemorates so nobly at the close of his essay on "Longfellow and his Art," in "Men and Letters": "It is too early to make a full survey of the immense importance to American letters of the work done by half-a-dozen great men in the middle of this century. The body of prose and verse created by them is constituting the solid foundation upon which other structures are to rise; the humanity which it holds is entering into the life of the country, and no material invention, or scientific discovery, or institutional prosperity, or accumulation of wealth will so powerfully affect the spiritual well-being of the nation for generations to come" (page 69).

If it now be asked what prevented Horace Scudder from showing more fully this gift of higher literature and led to his acquiescing, through life, in a comparatively secondary function, I can find but one explanation, and that a most interesting one to us in New England, as

illustrating the effect of immediate surroundings. His father, so far as I can ascertain, was one of those Congregationalists of the milder type who, while strict in their opinions, are led by a sunny temperament to be genial with their households and to allow them innocent amusements. The mother was a Congregationalist, firm but not severe in her opinions; but always controlled by that indomitable New England conscience of the older time, which made her sacrifice herself to every call of charity and even to refuse, as tradition says, to have window curtains in her house, inasmuch as many around her could not even buy blankets. Add to this the fact that Boston was then a great missionary centre, that several prominent leaders in that cause were of the Scudder family, and the house was a sort of headquarters for them, and that Horace Scudder's own elder brother, whose memoirs he wrote, went as a missionary to India, dying at his post. Speaking of his father's family in his memoir, he says of it, "In the conduct of the household, there was recognition of some more profound meaning in life than could find expression in mere enjoyment of living; while the presence of a real religious sentiment banished that counterfeit solemnity which would hang over innocent pleasure like a cloud" (Scudder's "Life of David Coit Scudder," page 4). By one bred in

such an atmosphere of self-sacrifice, that quality may well be imbibed; it may even become a second nature, so that the instinctive demand for self-assertion may become subordinate until many a man ends in finding full contentment in doing perfectly the appointed work of every day. If we hold as we should that it is character, not mere talent, which ennobles life, we may well feel that there is something not merely pardonable, but ennobling, in such a habit of mind. Viewed in this light, his simple devotion to modest duty may well be to many of us rather a model than a thing to be criticised.

# XVII

# EDWARD ATKINSON

# EDWARD ATKINSON

EDWARD ATKINSON, a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences since March 12, 1879, was born in Brookline, Massachusetts, on February 10, 1827, and died in Boston on December 11, 1905. He was descended on his father's side from the patriot minute-man, Lieutenant Amos Atkinson, and on the maternal side from Stephen Greenleaf, a well-known fighter of Indians in the colonial period; thus honestly inheriting on both sides that combative spirit in good causes which marked his life. Owing to the business reverses of his father, he was prevented from receiving, as his elder brother, William Parsons Atkinson, had received, a Harvard College education, a training which was also extended to all of Edward Atkinson's sons, at a later day. At fifteen he entered the employment of Read and Chadwick, Commission Merchants, Boston, in the capacity of office boy; but he rapidly rose to the position of book-keeper, and subsequently became connected with several cotton manufacturing companies in Lewiston, Maine, and elsewhere. He was for many years the treasurer of a number of such corporations, and in 1878

became President of the Boston Manufacturers' Mutual Insurance Company. Such business was in a somewhat chaotic state when he took hold of it, but he remained in its charge until his death, having during this time organized, enlarged, and perfected the mutual insurance of industrial concerns. In 1855 he married Miss Mary Caroline Heath, of Brookline, who died in December, 1907. He is survived by seven children, — Mrs. Ernest Winsor, E. W. Atkinson, Charles H. Atkinson, William Atkinson, Robert W. Atkinson, Miss C. P. Atkinson, and Mrs. R. G. Wadsworth.

This gives the mere outline of a life of extraordinary activity and usefulness which well merits a further delineation in detail. Mr. Atkinson's interest in public life began with a vote for Horace Mann in 1848. Twenty years after, speaking at Salem, he described himself as never having been anything else than a Republican; but he was one of those who supported Cleveland for President in 1884, and whose general affinities were with the Democratic party. He opposed with especial vigor what is often called "the imperial policy," which followed the Cuban War, and he conducted a periodical of his own from time to time, making the most elaborate single battery which the war-party had to encounter.

From an early period of life he was a profuse

and vigorous pamphleteer, his first pamphlet being published during the Civil War and entitled "Cheap Cotton by Free Labor," and this publication led to his acquaintance with David R. Wells and Charles Nordhoff, thenceforth his life-long friends. His early pamphlets were on the cotton question in different forms (1863–76); he wrote on blockade-running (1865); on the Pacific Railway (1871); and on mutual fire insurance (1885), this last being based on personal experience as the head of a mutual company. He was also, during his whole life, in print and otherwise, a strong and effective fighter for sound currency.

A large part of his attention from 1889 onward was occupied by experiments in cooking and diet, culminating in an invention of his own called "The Aladdin Oven." This led him into investigations as to the cost of nutrition in different countries, on which subject he also wrote pamphlets. He soon was led into experiments so daring that he claimed to have proved it possible to cook with it, in open air, a five-course dinner for ten persons, and gave illustrations of this at outdoor entertainments. He claimed that good nutrition could be had for $1 per week, and that a family of five, by moderate management, could be comfortably supported on $180 per year (Boston "Herald," October 8, 1891). These surprising figures unfortunately created among the

laboring-class a good deal of sharp criticism, culminating in the mistaken inquiry, why he did not feed his own family at $180 a year, if it was so easy? I can only say for one, that if the meals at that price were like a dinner of which I partook at his own house with an invited party, and at which I went through the promised five courses after seeing them all prepared in the garden, I think that his standard of poverty came very near to luxury.

Mingled with these things in later years was introduced another valuable department of instruction. He was more and more called upon to give addresses, especially on manufactures, before Southern audiences, and there was no disposition to criticise him for his anti-slavery record. Another man could hardly be found whose knowledge of manufacturing and of insurance combined made him so fit to give counsel in the new business impulse showing itself at the South. He wrote much (1877) on cotton goods, called for an international cotton exposition, and gave an address at Atlanta, Georgia, which was printed in Boston in 1881.

Looking now at Atkinson's career with the eyes of a literary man, it seems clear to me that no college training could possibly have added to his power of accumulating knowledge or his wealth in the expression of it. But the

academic tradition might have best added to these general statements in each case some simple address or essay which would bring out clearly to the minds of an untrained audience the essential points of each single theme. Almost everything he left is the talk of a specially trained man to a limited audience, also well trained, — at least in the particular department to which he addresses himself. The men to whom he talks may not know how to read or write, but they are all practically versed in the subjects of which he treats. He talks as a miner to miners, a farmer to farmers, a cook to cooks; but among all of his papers which I have examined, that in which he appears to the greatest advantage to the general reader is his "Address before the Alumni of Andover Theological Seminary" on June 9, 1886. Here he speaks as one representing a wholly different pursuit from that of his auditors; a layman to clergymen, or those aiming to become so. He says to them frankly at the outset, "I have often thought [at church] that if a member of the congregation could sometimes occupy the pulpit while the minister took his place in the pew, it might be a benefit to both. The duty has been assigned to me to-day to trace out the connection between morality and a true system of political or industrial economy."

He goes on to remind them that the book which is said to rank next to the Bible toward the benefit of the human race is Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations," and that the same Adam Smith wrote a book on moral philosophy, which is now but little read. He therefore takes the former of Smith's books, not the latter, as his theme, and thus proceeds : —

"I wonder how many among your number ever recall the fact that it has been the richest manufacturers who have clothed the naked at the least cost to them ; that it is the great bonanza farmer who now feeds the hungry at the lowest price ; that Vanderbilt achieved his great fortune by reducing the cost of moving a barrel of flour a thousand miles, — from three dollars and fifty cents to less than seventy cents. This was the great work assigned to him, whether he knew it or not. His fortune was but an incident, — the main object, doubtless, to himself, but a trifling incident compared to what he saved others." [1]

He then goes on to show that whatever may be the tricks or wrongs of commerce, they lie on the surface, and that every great success is based upon very simple facts.

"The great manufacturer [he says] who guides the operations of a factory of a hundred thousand spindles, in which fifteen hundred men, women, and

[1] *Address before the Alumni of Andover*, 1.

children earn their daily bread, himself works on a narrow margin of one fourth of a cent on each yard of cloth. If he shall not have applied truth to every branch of construction and of the operation of that factory, it will fail and become worthless ; and then with toilsome labor a hundred and fifty thousand women might try to clothe themselves and you, who are now clothed by the service of fifteen hundred only.

" Such is the disparity in the use of time, brought into beneficent action by modern manufacturing processes.

" The banker who deals in credit by millions upon millions must possess truth of insight, truth of judgment, truth of character. Probity and integrity constitute his capital, for the very reason that the little margin which he seeks to gain for his own service is but the smallest fraction of a per cent upon each transaction. I supervise directly or indirectly the insurance upon four hundred million dollars' worth of factory property. The products of these factories, machine-shops, and other works must be worth six hundred million dollars a year. It is n't worth fifty cents on each hundred dollars to guarantee their notes or obligations, while ninety-nine and one half per cent of all the sales they make will be promptly paid when due." [1]

He elsewhere turns from viewing the factory system with business eyes alone to the consid-

[1] *Address before the Alumni of Andover*, 10.

eration of it from the point of view of the laborer. There is no want of sympathy, we soon find, in this man of inventions and statistics. He thus goes on: —

"The very manner in which this great seething, toiling, crowded mass of laboring men and women bear the hardships of life leads one to faith in humanity and itself gives confidence in the future. If it were not that there is a Divine order even in the hardships which seem so severe, and that even the least religious, in the technical sense, have faith in each other, the anarchist and nihilist might be a cause of dread.

"As I walk through the great factories which are insured in the company of which I am president, trying to find out what more can be done to save them from destruction by fire, I wonder if I myself should not strike, just for the sake of variety, if I were a mule-spinner, obliged to bend over the machine, mending the ends of the thread, while I walked ten or fifteen miles a day without raising my eyes to the great light above. I wonder how men and women bear the monotony of the workshop and of the factory, in which the division of labor is carried to its utmost, and in which they must work year in and year out, only on some small part of a fabric or an implement, never becoming capable of making the whole fabric or of constructing the whole machine." [1]

[1] *Address to Workingmen in Providence*, April 11, 1886, p. 19.

We thus find him quite ready to turn his varied knowledge and his executive power towards schemes for the relief of the operative, schemes of which he left many.

Mr. Atkinson, a year or two later (1890), wrote a similarly popularized statement of social science for an address on "Religion and Life" before the American Unitarian Association. In his usual matter-of-fact way, he had prepared himself by inquiring at the headquarters of different religious denominations for a printed creed of each. He first bought an Episcopal creed at the Old Corner Bookstore for two cents, an Orthodox creed at the Congregational Building for the same amount, then a Methodist two-cent creed also, a Baptist creed for five cents, and a Presbyterian one for ten, Unitarian and Universalist creeds being furnished him for nothing; and then he proceeds to give some extracts whose bigotry makes one shudder, and not wonder much that he expressed sympathy mainly with the Catholics and the Jews, rather than with the severer schools among Protestants. And it is already to be noticed how much the tendency of liberal thought, during the last twenty years, has been in the direction whither his sympathies went.

As time went on, he had to undergo the test which awaits all Northern public men visiting

the Southern States, but not met by all in so simple and straightforward a way as he. Those who doubt the capacity of the mass of men in our former slave states to listen to plainness of speech should turn with interest to Atkinson's plain talk to the leading men of Atlanta, Georgia, in October, 1880. He says, almost at the beginning: "Now, gentlemen of the South, I am going to use free speech for a purpose and to speak some plain words of truth and soberness to you. . . . I speak, then, to you here and now as a Republican of Republicans, as an Abolitionist of early time, a Free-Soiler of later date, and a Republican of to-day." And the record is that he was received with applause. He goes on to say as frankly: "When slavery ended, not only were blacks made free from the bondage imposed by others, but whites as well were redeemed by the bondage they had imposed upon themselves. . . . When you study the past system of slave labor with the present system of free labor, irrespective of all personal considerations, you will be mad down to the soles of your boots to think that you ever tolerated it; and when you have come to this wholesome condition of mind, you will wonder how the devil you could have been so slow in seeing it. [Laughter.]"

Then he suddenly drops down to the solid

fact and says: "Are you not asking Northern men to come here, and do you not seek Northern capital? If you suppose either will come here unless every man can say what he pleases, as I do now, you are mistaken." Then he goes on with his speech, rather long as he was apt to make them, but addressing a community much more leisurely than that which he had left at home; filling their minds with statistics, directions, and methods, till at last, recurring to the question of caste and color, he closes fearlessly: "As you convert the darkness of oppression and slavery to liberty and justice, so shall you be judged by men, and by Him who created all the nations of the earth."

After tracing the course and training of an eminent American at home, it is often interesting to follow him into the new experiences of the foreign traveler. In that very amusing book, "Notes from a Diary," by Grant Duff (later Sir Mountstuart Elphinstone Grant Duff), the author writes that he came unexpectedly upon a breakfast (June, 1887), the guests being "Atkinson, the New England Free Trader, Colonel Hay, and Frederic Harrison, all of whom were well brought out by our host and talked admirably." I quote some extracts from the talk: —

"Mr. Atkinson said that quite the best after-dinner speech he had ever heard was from Mr.

Samuel Longfellow, brother of the poet. An excellent speech had been made by Mr. Longworth, and the proceedings should have closed, when Mr. Longfellow was very tactlessly asked to address the meeting, which he did in the words: 'It is, I think, well known that worth makes the man, but want of it the fellow,' and sat down." After this mild beginning we have records of good talk.

"Other subjects [Grant Duff says] were the hostility of the Socialists in London to the Positivists and to the Trades Unions; the great American fortunes and their causes, the rapid melting away of some of them, the hindrance which they are to political success; and servants in the United States, of whom Atkinson spoke relatively, Colonel Hay absolutely, well, saying that he usually kept his from six to eight years. . . .

"Atkinson said that all the young thought and ability in America is in favor of free trade, but that free trade has not begun to make any way politically. Harrison remarked that he was unwillingly, but ever more and more, being driven to believe that the residuum was almost entirely composed of people who would not work. Atkinson took the same view, observing that during the war much was said about the misery of the working-women of Boston. He offered admirable terms if they would only go a little way into the country to work in his factory. Forty were at last got together to have the

conditions explained — ten agreed to go next morning, of whom one arrived at the station, and she would not go alone!"

On another occasion we read in the "Diary":

"We talked of Father Taylor, and he [Atkinson] told us that the great orator once began a sermon by leaning over the pulpit, with his arms folded, and saying, 'You people ought to be very good, if you 're not, for you live in Paradise already.'

"The conversation, in which Sir Louis Malet took part, turned to Mill's economical heresies, especially that which relates to the fostering of infant industries. Atkinson drew a striking picture of the highly primitive economic condition of the South before the war, and said that now factories of all kinds are springing up throughout the country in spite of the keen competition of the North. He cited a piece of advice given to his brother by Theodore Parker, 'Never try to lecture down to your audience.' This maxim is in strict accordance with an opinion expressed by Hugh Miller, whom, having to address on the other side of the Firth just the same sort of people as those amongst whom he lived at Cromarty, I took as my guide in this matter during the long period in which I was connected with the Elgin Burghs.

"Atkinson went on to relate that at the time of Mr. Hayes's election to the presidency there was great danger of an outbreak, and he sat in council with General Taylor and Abraham Hewitt, doing

his best to prevent it. At length he exclaimed: 'Now I think we may fairly say that the war is over. Here are we three acting together for a common object, and who are we? You, Mr. Hewitt, are the leader of the Democratic party in New York; I am an old Abolitionist who subscribed to furnish John Brown and his companions with rifles; you, General Taylor, are the last Confederate officer who surrendered an army, and you surrendered it not because you were willing to do so, but, as you yourself admit, because you could n't help it.'"

The publication which will perhaps be much consulted in coming years as the best periodical organ of that party in the nation which was most opposed to the Philippine war will doubtless be the work issued by Mr. Atkinson on his own responsibility and by his own editing, from June 3, 1899, to September, 1900, under the name of "The Anti-Imperialist." It makes a solid volume of about 400 octavo pages, and was conducted wholly on Atkinson's own responsibility, financially and otherwise, though a large part of the expense was paid him by volunteers, to the extent of $5,657.87 or more, covering an outlay of $5,870.62, this amount being largely received in sums of one dollar, obtained under what is known as the chain method. For this amount were printed more than 100,000 copies of a series of pamphlets, of which the

first two were withdrawn from the mail as seditious under President McKinley's administration. A more complete triumph of personal independence was perhaps never seen in our literature, and it is easy to recognize the triumph it achieved for a high-minded and courageous as well as constitutionally self-willed man. The periodical exerted an influence which lasts to this day, although the rapidity of political change has now thrown it into the background for all except the systematic student of history. It seemed to Mr. Atkinson, at any rate, his crowning work.

The books published by Edward Atkinson were the following: "The Distribution of Profits," 1885; "The Industrial Progress of the Nation," 1889; "The Margin of Profit," 1890; "Taxation and Work," 1892; "Facts and Figures the Basis of Economic Science," 1894. This last was printed at the Riverside Press, the others being issued by Putnam & Co., New York. He wrote also the following papers in leading periodicals: "Is Cotton our King?" ("Continental Monthly," March, 1862); "Revenue Reform" ("Atlantic," October, 1871); "An American View of American Competition" ("Fortnightly," London, March, 1879); "The Unlearned Professions" ("Atlantic," June, 1880); "What makes the Rate of Interest"

("Forum," 1880); "Elementary Instruction in the Mechanics Arts" ("Century," May, 1881); "Leguminous Plants suggested for Ensilage" ("Agricultural," 1882); "Economy in Domestic Cookery" ("American Architect," May, 1887); "Must Humanity starve at Last?" "How can Wages be increased?" "The Struggle for Subsistence," "The Price of Life" (all in "Forum" for 1888); "How Society reforms Itself," and "The Problem of Poverty" (both in "Forum" for 1889); "A Single Tax on Land" ("Century," 1890); and many others. When the amount of useful labor performed by the men of this generation comes to be reviewed a century hence, it is doubtful whether a more substantial and varied list will be found credited to the memory of any one in America than that which attaches to the memory of Edward Atkinson.

# XVIII

# JAMES ELLIOT CABOT

# JAMES ELLIOT CABOT

Our late associate, Elliot Cabot, of whom I have been appointed to write a sketch, was to me, from my college days, an object of peculiar interest, on a variety of grounds. He was distantly related to me, in more than one way, through the endless intermarriages of the old Essex County families. Though two years and a half older, he was but one year in advance of me in Harvard College. He and his chum, Henry Bryant, who had been my schoolmate, were among the early founders of the Harvard Natural History Society, then lately established, of which I was an ardent member; and I have never had such a sensation of earthly glory as when I succeeded Bryant in the responsible function of Curator of Entomology in that august body. I used sometimes in summer to encounter Cabot in the Fresh Pond marshes, then undrained, which he afterwards described so delightfully in the "Atlantic Monthly" in his paper entitled "Sedge Birds" (xxiii, 384). On these occasions he bore his gun, and I only the humbler weapon of a butterfly net. After we had left college, I looked upon him with envy as one of

the early and successful aspirants to that German post-collegiate education which was already earnestly desired, but rarely attained, by the more studious among Harvard graduates. After his return, I was brought more or less in contact with him, at the close of the "Dial" period, and in the following years of Transcendentalism; and, later still, I was actively associated with him for a time in that group of men who have always dreamed of accomplishing something through the Harvard Visiting Committee, and have retired from it with hopes unaccomplished. Apart from his labors as Emerson's scribe and editor, he seemed to withdraw himself more and more from active life as time went on, and to accept gracefully the attitude which many men find so hard, — that of being, in a manner, superseded by the rising generation. This he could do more easily, since he left a family of sons to represent in various forms the tastes and gifts that were combined in him; and he also left a manuscript autobiography, terse, simple, and modest, like himself, to represent what was in its way a quite unique career. Of this sketch I have been allowed to avail myself through the courtesy of his sons.

James Elliot Cabot was born in Boston June 18, 1821, his birthplace being in Quincy Place, upon the slope of Fort Hill, in a house

which had belonged to his grandfather, Samuel Cabot, brother of George Cabot, the well-known leader of the Federalists in his day. These brothers belonged to a family originating in the Island of Jersey and coming early to Salem, Massachusetts. Elliot Cabot's father was also named Samuel, while his mother was the eldest child of Thomas Handasyd Perkins and Sarah Elliot; the former being best known as Colonel Perkins, who gave his house and grounds on Pearl Street toward the foundation of the Blind Asylum bearing his name, and also gave profuse gifts to other Boston institutions; deriving meanwhile his military title from having held command of the Boston Cadets. Elliot Cabot was, therefore, born and bred in the most influential circle of the little city of that date, and he dwelt in what was then the most attractive part of Boston, though long since transformed into a business centre.

His summers were commonly spent at Nahant, then a simple and somewhat primitive seaside spot, and his childhood was also largely passed in the house in Brookline built by Colonel Perkins for his daughter. Elliot Cabot went to school in Boston under the well-known teachers of that day, — Thayer, Ingraham, and Leverett. When twelve years old, during the absence of his parents in Europe, he was sent to a board-

ing-school in Brookline, but spent Saturday and Sunday with numerous cousins at the house of Colonel Perkins, their common grandfather, who lived in a large and hospitable manner, maintaining an ampler establishment than is to be found in the more crowded Boston of to-day. This ancestor was a man of marked individuality, and I remember hearing from one of his grandchildren an amusing account of the scene which occurred, on one of these Sunday evenings, after the delivery of a total abstinence sermon by the Rev. Dr. Channing, of whose parish Colonel Perkins was one of the leading members. The whole theory of total abstinence was then an absolute innovation, and its proclamation, which came rather suddenly from Dr. Channing, impressed Colonel Perkins much as it might have moved one of Thackeray's English squires; insomuch that he had a double allowance of wine served out that evening to each of his numerous grandsons in place of their accustomed wineglass of diluted beverage, and this to their visible disadvantage as the evening went on.

Elliot Cabot entered Harvard College in 1836 as Freshman, and though he passed his entrance examinations well, took no prominent rank in his class, but read all sorts of out-of-the-way books and studied natural history. He was also

an early reader of Carlyle's "Sartor Resartus," then just published; and was, in general, quite disposed to pursue his own course in mental culture. He belonged to the Hasty Pudding Club and to the Porcellian Club, but spent much time with his classmates, Henry Bryant and William Sohier, in shooting excursions, which had then the charm of being strictly prohibited by the college. The young men were obliged to carry their guns slung for concealment in two parts, the barrels separated from the stock, under their cloaks, which were then much worn instead of overcoats. This taste was strengthened by the example of Cabot's elder brother, afterwards Dr. Samuel Cabot, an ornithologist; and as the latter was then studying medicine in Paris, the young men used to send him quantities of specimens for purposes of exchange. Dr. Henry Bryant is well remembered in Boston for the large collection of birds given by him to the Boston Natural History Society.

Soon after his graduation, in 1840, Elliot Cabot went abroad with the object of joining his elder brother in Switzerland, visiting Italy, wintering in Paris, and returning home in the spring; but this ended in his going for the winter to Heidelberg instead, a place then made fascinating to all young Americans through the

glowing accounts in Longfellow's "Hyperion." They were also joined by two other classmates, — Edward Holker Welch, afterwards well known in the Roman Catholic priesthood, and John Fenwick Heath, of Virginia, well remembered by the readers of Lowell's letters. All of these four were aiming at the profession of the law, although not one of them, I believe, finally devoted himself to its practice. Migrating afterwards to Berlin, after the fashion of German students, they were admitted to the University on their Harvard degrees by Ranke, the great historian, who said, as he inspected their parchments, "Ah! the High School at Boston!" which they thought showed little respect for President Quincy's parchment, until they found that "Hoch Schule" was the German equivalent for University. There they heard the lectures of Schelling, then famous, whom they found to be a little man of ordinary appearance, old, infirm, and taking snuff constantly, as if to keep himself awake. Later they again removed, this time to Göttingen, where Cabot busied himself with the study of Kant, and also attended courses in Rudolph Wagner's laboratory. Here he shared more of the social life of his companions, frequented their Liederkränze, learned to fence and to dance, and spent many evenings at students' festivals.

Cabot sums up his whole European reminiscences as follows: "As I look back over my residence in Europe, what strikes me is the waste of time and energy from having had no settled purpose to keep my head steady. I seem to have been always well employed and happy, but I had been indulging a disposition to mental sauntering, and the picking up of scraps, very unfavorable to my education. I was, I think, naturally inclined to hover somewhat above the solid earth of practical life, and thus to miss its most useful lessons. The result, I think, was to confirm me in the vices of my mental constitution and to cut off what chance there was of my accomplishing something worth while."

In March, 1843, he finally left Göttingen for home by way of Belgium and England, and entered the Harvard Law School in the autumn, taking his degree there two years later, in 1845. Renewing acquaintance with him during this period, I found him to be, as always, modest and reticent in manner, bearing unconsciously a certain European prestige upon him, which so commanded the respect of a circle of young men that we gave him the sobriquet of "Jarno," after the well-known philosophic leader in Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister." Whatever he may say of himself, I cannot help still retaining

somewhat of my old feeling about the mental training of the man who, while in the Law School, could write a paper so admirable as Cabot's essay entitled "Immanuel Kant" ("Dial," iv, 409), an essay which seems to me now, as it then seemed, altogether the simplest and most effective statement I have ever encountered of the essential principles of that great thinker's philosophy. I remember that when I told Cabot that I had been trying to read Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason" in an English translation, but could not understand it, he placidly replied that he had read it twice in German and had thought he comprehended it, but that Meiklejohn's translation was beyond making out, so that I need not be discouraged.

After graduating from the Law School, he went for a year into a law office in Boston, acting as senior partner to my classmate, Francis Edward Parker, who, being a born lawyer, as Cabot was not, found it for his own profit to sever the partnership at the end of a year, while Cabot retired from the profession forever. His German training had meanwhile made him well known to the leaders of a new literary enterprise, originating with Theodore Parker and based upon a meeting at Mr. Emerson's house in 1849, the object being the organ-

ization of a new magazine, which should be, in Theodore Parker's phrase, "the 'Dial' with a beard." Liberals and reformers were present at the meeting, including men so essentially diverse as Sumner and Thoreau. Parker was, of course, to be the leading editor, and became such. Emerson also consented, "rather weakly," as Cabot says in his memoranda, to appear, and contributed only the introductory address, while Cabot himself agreed to act as corresponding secretary and business manager. The "Massachusetts Quarterly Review" sustained itself with difficulty for three years, — showing more of studious and systematic work than its predecessor, the "Dial," but far less of freshness and originality, — and then went under.

A more successful enterprise in which he was meanwhile enlisted was a trip to Lake Superior with Agassiz, in 1850, when Cabot acted as secretary and wrote and illustrated the published volume of the expedition, — a book which was then full of fresh novelties, and which is still very readable. Soon after his return, he went into his brother Edward's architect office in Boston to put his accounts in order, and ultimately became a partner in the business, erecting various buildings.

He was married on September 28, 1857,

to Elizabeth Dwight, daughter of Edmund Dwight, Esq., a woman of rare qualities and great public usefulness, who singularly carried on the tradition of those Essex County women of an earlier generation, who were such strong helpmates to their husbands. Of Mrs. Cabot it might almost have been said, as was said by John Lowell in 1826 of his cousin, Elizabeth Higginson, wife of her double first cousin, George Cabot: "She had none of the advantages of early education afforded so bountifully to the young ladies of the present age; but she surpassed *all* of them in the acuteness of her observation, in the knowledge of human nature, and in her power of expressing and defending the opinions which she had formed."[1] Thus Elliot Cabot writes of his wife: "From the time when the care of her children ceased to occupy the most of her time, she gradually became one of the most valuable of the town officials, as well as the unofficial counselor of many who needed the unfailing succor of her inexhaustible sympathy and practical helpfulness."

Cabot visited Europe anew after his marriage, and after his return, served for nine years as a school-committee-man in Brookline, where he resided. He afterwards did faithful duty for six

[1] Lodge's *George Cabot*, 12, note.

years as chairman of the examining committee of Harvard Overseers. He gave for a single year a series of lectures on Kant at Harvard University, and for a time acted as instructor in Logic there, which included a supervision of the forensics or written discussions then in vogue. The Civil War aroused his sympathies strongly, especially when his brother Edward and his personal friend, Francis L. Lee, became respectively Lieutenant-Colonel and Colonel of the 44th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry. Elliot Cabot himself enlisted in a drill club, and did some work for the Sanitary Commission. He also assisted greatly in organizing the Museum of Fine Arts and in the administration of the Boston Athenæum.

Though a life-long student, he wrote little for the press, — a fact which recalls Theodore Parker's remark about him, that he "could make a good law argument, but could not address it to the jury." He rendered, however, a great and permanent service, far outweighing that performed by most American authors of his time, as volunteer secretary to Ralph Waldo Emerson, a task which constituted his main occupation for five or six years. After Emerson's death, Cabot also wrote his memoirs, by the wish of the family, — a book which will always remain the primary authority on the

subject with which it deals, although it was justly criticised by others for a certain restricted tone which made it seem to be, as it really was, the work of one shy and reticent man telling the story of another. In describing Emerson, the biographer often unconsciously described himself also; and the later publications of Mr. Emerson's only son show clearly that there was room for a more ample and varied treatment in order to complete the work.

Under these circumstances, Cabot's home life, while of even tenor, was a singularly happy one. One of his strongest and life-long traits was his love of children, — a trait which he also eminently shared with Emerson. The group formed by him with two grandchildren in his lap, to whom he was reading John Gilpin or Hans Andersen, is one which those who knew him at home would never forget. It was characteristic also that in his German copy of Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason," already mentioned, there were found some papers covered with drawings of horses and carts which had been made to amuse some eager child. Akin to this was his strong love of flowers, united with a rare skill in making beautiful shrubs grow here and there in such places as would bring out the lines and curves of his estate at Beverly. Even during the last summer

of his life, he was cutting new little vistas on the Beverly hills. His sketches of landscape in water-color were also very characteristic both of his delicate and poetic appreciation of nature and of his skill and interest in drawing. In 1885, while in Italy, he used to draw objects seen from the car window as he traveled; and often in the morning, when his family came down to breakfast at hotels, they found that he had already made an exquisite sketch in pencil of some tower or arch.

His outward life, on the whole, seemed much akin to the lives led by that considerable class of English gentlemen who adopt no profession, dwelling mainly on their paternal estates, yet are neither politicians nor fox-hunters; pursuing their own favorite studies, taking part from time to time in the pursuits of science, art, or literature, even holding minor public functions, but winning no widespread fame. He showed, on the other hand, the freedom from prejudice, the progressive tendency, and the ideal proclivities which belong more commonly to Americans. He seemed to himself to have accomplished nothing; and yet he had indirectly aided a great many men by the elevation of his tone and the breadth of his intellectual sympathy. If he did not greatly help to stimulate the thought of his time, he helped distinctly to en-

large and ennoble it. His death occurred at Brookline, Massachusetts, on January 16, 1903. He died as he had lived, a high-minded, stainless, and in some respects unique type of American citizen.

# XIX

# EMILY DICKINSON

# EMILY DICKINSON

FEW events in American literary history have been more curious than the sudden rise of Emily Dickinson many years since into a posthumous fame only more accentuated by the utterly recluse character of her life. The lines which formed a prelude to the first volume of her poems are the only ones that have yet come to light which indicate even a temporary desire to come in contact with the great world of readers; for she seems to have had no reference, in all the rest, to anything but her own thought and a few friends. But for her only sister, it is very doubtful if her poems would ever have been printed at all; and when published, they were launched quietly and without any expectation of a wide audience. Yet the outcome of it was that six editions of the volume were sold within six months, a suddenness of success almost without a parallel in American literature.

On April 16, 1862, I took from the post-office the following letter: —

MR. HIGGINSON, — Are you too deeply occupied to say if my verse is alive?

The mind is so near itself it cannot see distinctly, and I have none to ask.

Should you think it breathed, and had you the leisure to tell me, I should feel quick gratitude.

If I make the mistake, that you dared to tell me would give me sincerer honor toward you.

I inclose my name, asking you, if you please, sir, to tell me what is true?

That you will not betray me it is needless to ask, since honor is its own pawn.

The letter was postmarked "Amherst," and it was in a handwriting so peculiar that it seemed as if the writer might have taken her first lessons by studying the famous fossil bird-tracks in the museum of that college town. Yet it was not in the slightest degree illiterate, but cultivated, quaint, and wholly unique. Of punctuation there was little; she used chiefly dashes, and it has been thought better, in printing these letters, as with her poems, to give them the benefit in this respect of the ordinary usages; and so with her habit as to capitalization, as the printers call it, in which she followed the Old English and present German method of thus distinguishing every noun substantive. But the most curious thing about the letter was the total absence of a signature. It proved, however, that she had written her name on a card, and put it under the shelter of a smal-

ler envelope inclosed in the larger; and even this name was written — as if the shy writer wished to recede as far as possible from view — in pencil, not in ink. The name was Emily Dickinson. Inclosed with the letter were four poems, two of which have since been separately printed, — "Safe in their alabaster chambers" and "I'll tell you how the sun rose," besides the two that here follow. The first comprises in its eight lines a truth so searching that it seems a condensed summary of the whole experience of a long life: —

"We play at paste
Till qualified for pearl;
Then drop the paste
And deem ourself a fool.

"The shapes, though, were similar
And our new hands
Learned gem-tactics,
Practicing sands."

Then came one which I have always classed among the most exquisite of her productions, with a singular felicity of phrase and an aerial lift that bears the ear upward with the bee it traces: —

"The nearest dream recedes unrealized.
The heaven we chase,
Like the June bee

Before the schoolboy,
Invites the race,
Stoops to an easy clover,
Dips — evades — teases — deploys —
Then to the royal clouds
Lifts his light pinnace,
Heedless of the boy
Staring, bewildered, at the mocking sky.

"Homesick for steadfast honey,—
Ah! the bee flies not
Which brews that rare variety."

The impression of a wholly new and original poetic genius was as distinct on my mind at the first reading of these four poems as it is now, after half a century of further knowledge; and with it came the problem never yet solved, what place ought to be assigned in literature to what is so remarkable, yet so elusive of criticism. The bee himself did not evade the schoolboy more than she evaded me; and even at this day I still stand somewhat bewildered, like the boy.

Circumstances, however, soon brought me in contact with an uncle of Emily Dickinson, a gentleman not now living: a prominent citizen of Worcester, Massachusetts, a man of integrity and character, who shared her abruptness and impulsiveness, but certainly not her poetic temperament, from which he was indeed singularly

remote. He could tell but little of her, she being evidently an enigma to him, as to me. It is hard to say what answer was made by me, under these circumstances, to this letter. It is probable that the adviser sought to gain time a little and find out with what strange creature he was dealing. I remember to have ventured on some criticism which she afterwards called "surgery," and on some questions, part of which she evaded, as will be seen, with a naïve skill such as the most experienced and worldly coquette might envy. Her second letter (received April 26, 1862) was as follows: —

MR. HIGGINSON, — Your kindness claimed earlier gratitude, but I was ill, and write to-day from my pillow.

Thank you for the surgery; it was not so painful as I supposed. I bring you others, as you ask, though they might not differ. While my thought is undressed, I can make the distinction; but when I put them in the gown, they look alike and numb.

You asked how old I was? I made no verse, but one or two, until this winter, sir.

I had a terror since September, I could tell to none; and so I sing, as the boy does of the burying ground, because I am afraid.

You inquire my books. For poets, I have Keats, and Mr. and Mrs. Browning. For prose, Mr. Ruskin, Sir Thomas Browne, and the Revelations. I went to school, but in your manner of the phrase

had no education. When a little girl, I had a friend who taught me Immortality; but venturing too near, himself, he never returned. Soon after my tutor died, and for several years my lexicon was my only companion. Then I found one more, but he was not contented I be his scholar, so he left the land.

You ask of my companions. Hills, sir, and the sundown, and a dog large as myself, that my father bought me. They are better than beings because they know, but do not tell; and the noise in the pool at noon excels my piano.

I have a brother and sister; my mother does not care for thought, and father, too busy with his briefs to notice what we do. He buys me many books, but begs me not to read them, because he fears they joggle the mind. They are religious, except me, and address an eclipse, every morning, whom they call their "Father."

But I fear my story fatigues you. I would like to learn. Could you tell me how to grow, or is it unconveyed, like melody or witchcraft?

You speak of Mr. Whitman. I never read his book, but was told that it was disgraceful.

I read Miss Prescott's "Circumstance," but it followed me in the dark, so I avoided her.

Two editors of journals came to my father's house this winter, and asked me for my mind, and when I asked them "why" they said I was penurious, and they would use it for the world.

I could not weigh myself, myself. My size felt

small to me. I read your chapters in the "Atlantic," and experienced honor for you. I was sure you would not reject a confiding question.

Is this, sir, what you asked me to tell you? Your friend, E. DICKINSON.

It will be seen that she had now drawn a step nearer, signing her name, and as my "friend." It will also be noticed that I had sounded her about certain American authors, then much read; and that she knew how to put her own criticisms in a very trenchant way. With this letter came some more verses, still in the same birdlike script, as for instance the following: —

"Your riches taught me poverty,
Myself a millionaire
In little wealths, as girls could boast,
Till, broad as Buenos Ayre,
You drifted your dominions
A different Peru,
And I esteemed all poverty
For life's estate, with you.

"Of mines, I little know, myself,
But just the names of gems,
The colors of the commonest,
And scarce of diadems
So much that, did I meet the queen,
Her glory I should know;

But this must be a different wealth,
To miss it, beggars so.

"I 'm sure 't is India, all day,
To those who look on you
Without a stint, without a blame,
Might I but be the Jew!
I 'm sure it is Golconda
Beyond my power to deem,
To have a smile for mine, each day,
How better than a gem!

"At least, it solaces to know
That there exists a gold
Although I prove it just in time
Its distance to behold;
Its far, far treasure to surmise
And estimate the pearl
That slipped my simple fingers through
While just a girl at school!"

Here was already manifest that defiance of form, never through carelessness, and never precisely from whim, which so marked her. The slightest change in the order of words — thus, "While yet at school, a girl" — would have given her a rhyme for this last line; but no; she was intent upon her thought, and it would not have satisfied her to make the change. The other poem further showed, what had already been visible, a rare and delicate sympathy with the life of nature: —

"A bird came down the walk;
He did not know I saw;
He bit an angle-worm in halves
And ate the fellow raw.

"And then he drank a dew
From a convenient grass,
And then hopped sidewise to a wall,
To let a beetle pass.

"He glanced with rapid eyes
That hurried all around;
They looked like frightened beads, I thought;
He stirred his velvet head

"Like one in danger, cautious.
I offered him a crumb,
And he unrolled his feathers
And rowed him softer home

"Than oars divide the ocean,
Too silver for a seam —
Or butterflies, off banks of noon,
Leap, plashless as they swim."

It is possible that in a second letter I gave more of distinct praise or encouragement, as her third is in a different mood. This was received June 8, 1862. There is something startling in its opening image; and in the yet stranger phrase that follows, where she apparently uses "mob" in the sense of chaos or bewilderment:

DEAR FRIEND, — Your letter gave no drunkenness, because I tasted rum before. Domingo comes but once; yet I have had few pleasures so deep as your opinion, and if I tried to thank you, my tears would block my tongue.

My dying tutor told me that he would like to live till I had been a poet, but Death was much of mob as I could master, then. And when, far afterward, a sudden light on orchards, or a new fashion in the wind troubled my attention, I felt a palsy, here, the verses just relieve.

Your second letter surprised me, and for a moment, swung. I had not supposed it. Your first gave no dishonor, because the true are not ashamed. I thanked you for your justice, but could not drop the bells whose jingling cooled my tramp. Perhaps the balm seemed better, because you bled me first. I smile when you suggest that I delay "to publish," that being foreign to my thought as firmament to fin.

If fame belonged to me, I could not escape her; if she did not, the longest day would pass me on the chase, and the approbation of my dog would forsake me then. My barefoot rank is better.

You think my gait "spasmodic." I am in danger, sir. You think me "uncontrolled." I have no tribunal.

Would you have time to be the "friend" you should think I need? I have a little shape: it would not crowd your desk, nor make much racket as the mouse that dens your galleries.

If I might bring you what I do — not so frequent

to trouble you — and ask you if I told it clear, 't would be control to me. The sailor cannot see the North, but knows the needle can. The "hand you stretch me in the dark" I put mine in, and turn away. I have no Saxon now: —

> As if I asked a common alms,
> And in my wandering hand
> A stranger pressed a kingdom,
> And I, bewildered, stand;
> As if I asked the Orient
> Had it for me a morn,
> And it should lift its purple dikes
> And shatter me with dawn!

But, will you be my preceptor, Mr. Higginson?

With this came the poem since published in one of her volumes and entitled "Renunciation"; and also that beginning "Of all the sounds dispatched abroad," thus fixing approximately the date of those two. I must soon have written to ask her for her picture, that I might form some impression of my enigmatical correspondent. To this came the following reply, in July, 1862: —

Could you believe me without? I had no portrait, now, but am small, like the wren; and my hair is bold like the chestnut bur; and my eyes, like the sherry in the glass, that the guest leaves. Would this do just as well?

It often alarms father. He says death might occur and he has moulds of all the rest, but has no mould

of me ; but I noticed the quick wore off those things, in a few days, and forestall the dishonor. You will think no caprice of me.

You said " Dark." I know the butterfly, and the lizard, and the orchis. Are not those *your* countrymen ?

I am happy to be your scholar, and will deserve the kindness I cannot repay.

If you truly consent, I recite now. Will you tell me my fault, frankly as to yourself, for I had rather wince than die. Men do not call the surgeon to commend the bone, but to set it, sir, and fracture within is more critical. And for this, preceptor, I shall bring you obedience, the blossom from my garden, and every gratitude I know.

Perhaps you smile at me. I could not stop for that. My business is circumference. An ignorance, not of customs, but if caught with the dawn, or the sunset see me, myself the only kangaroo among the beauty, sir, if you please, it afflicts me, and I thought that instruction would take it away.

Because you have much business, beside the growth of me, you will appoint, yourself, how often I shall come, without your inconvenience.

And if at any time you regret you received me, or I prove a different fabric to that you supposed, you must banish me.

When I state myself, as the representative of the verse, it does not mean me, but a supposed person.

You are true about the " perfection." To-day makes Yesterday mean.

You spoke of "Pippa Passes." I never heard anybody speak of "Pippa Passes" before. You see my posture is benighted.

To thank you baffles me. Are you perfectly powerful? Had I a pleasure you had not, I could delight to bring it. YOUR SCHOLAR.

This was accompanied by this strong poem, with its breathless conclusion. The title is of my own giving: —

THE SAINTS' REST

Of tribulation, these are they,
Denoted by the white;
The spangled gowns, a lesser rank
Of victors designate.

All these did conquer; but the ones
Who overcame most times,
Wear nothing commoner than snow,
No ornaments but palms.

"Surrender" is a sort unknown
On this superior soil;
"Defeat" an outgrown anguish,
Remembered as the mile

Our panting ancle barely passed
When night devoured the road;
But we stood whispering in the house,
And all we said, was "Saved!"

[Note by the writer of the verses.] I spelled ankle wrong.

It would seem that at first I tried a little — a very little — to lead her in the direction of rules and traditions ; but I fear it was only perfunctory, and that she interested me more in her — so to speak — unregenerate condition. Still, she recognizes the endeavor. In this case, as will be seen, I called her attention to the fact that while she took pains to correct the spelling of a word, she was utterly careless of greater irregularities. It will be seen by her answer that with her usual naïve adroitness she turns my point : —

DEAR FRIEND, — Are these more orderly? I thank you for the truth.

I had no monarch in my life, and cannot rule myself ; and when I try to organize, my little force explodes and leaves me bare and charred.

I think you called me " wayward." Will you help me improve?

I suppose the pride that stops the breath, in the core of woods, is not of ourself.

You say I confess the little mistake, and omit the large. Because I can see orthography ; but the ignorance out of sight is my preceptor's charge.

Of " shunning men and women," they talk of hallowed things, aloud, and embarrass my dog. He and I don't object to them, if they 'll exist their side. I think Carlo would please you. He is dumb, and brave. I think you would like the chestnut tree I met in my walk. It hit my notice suddenly, and I thought the skies were in blossom.

Then there 's a noiseless noise in the orchard that I let persons hear.

You told me in one letter you could not come to see me "now," and I made no answer ; not because I had none, but did not think myself the price that you should come so far.

I do not ask so large a pleasure, lest you might deny me.

You say, "Beyond your knowledge." You would not jest with me, because I believe you ; but, preceptor, you cannot mean it ?

All men say "What" to me, but I thought it a fashion.

When much in the woods, as a little girl, I was told that the snake would bite me, that I might pick a poisonous flower, or goblins kidnap me ; but I went along and met no one but angels, who were far shyer of me than I could be of them, so I have n't that confidence in fraud which many exercise.

I shall observe your precept, though I don't understand it, always.

I marked a line in one verse, because I met it after I made it, and never consciously touch a paint mixed by another person.

I do not let go it, because it is mine. Have you the portrait of Mrs. Browning ?

Persons sent me three. If you had none, will you have mine ? YOUR SCHOLAR.

A month or two after this I entered the volunteer army of the Civil War, and must have

written to her during the winter of 1862–63 from South Carolina or Florida, for the following reached me in camp : —

AMHERST.

DEAR FRIEND, — I did not deem that planetary forces annulled, but suffered an exchange of territory, or world.

I should have liked to see you before you became improbable. War feels to me an oblique place. Should there be other summers, would you perhaps come ?

I found you were gone, by accident, as I find systems are, or seasons of the year, and obtain no cause, but suppose it a treason of progress that dissolves as it goes. Carlo still remained, and I told him.

> Best gains must have the losses' test,
> To constitute them gains.

My shaggy ally assented.

Perhaps death gave me awe for friends, striking sharp and early, for I held them since in a brittle love, of more alarm than peace. I trust you may pass the limit of war ; and though not reared to prayer, when service is had in church for our arms, I include yourself. . . . I was thinking to-day, as I noticed, that the "Supernatural" was only the Natural disclosed.

> Not "Revelation" 't is that waits,
> But our unfurnished eyes.

But I fear I detain you. Should you, before this reaches you, experience immortality, who will inform

me of the exchange? Could you, with honor, avoid death, I entreat you, sir. It would bereave

YOUR GNOME.

I trust the "Procession of Flowers" was not a premonition.

I cannot explain this extraordinary signature, substituted for the now customary "Your Scholar," unless she imagined her friend to be in some incredible and remote condition, imparting its strangeness to her. Swedenborg somewhere has an image akin to her "oblique place," where he symbolizes evil as simply an oblique angle. With this letter came verses, most refreshing in that clime of jasmines and mockingbirds, on the familiar robin: —

THE ROBIN

The robin is the one
That interrupts the morn
With hurried, few, express reports
When March is scarcely on.

The robin is the one
That overflows the noon
With her cherubic quantity,
An April but begun.

The robin is the one
That, speechless from her nest,
Submits that home and certainty
And sanctity are best.

In the summer of 1863 I was wounded, and in hospital for a time, during which came this letter in pencil, written from what was practically a hospital for her, though only for weak eyes: —

Dear Friend, — Are you in danger? I did not know that you were hurt. Will you tell me more? Mr. Hawthorne died.

I was ill since September, and since April in Boston for a physician's care. He does not let me go, yet I work in my prison, and make guests for myself.

Carlo did not come, because that he would die in jail; and the mountains I could not hold now, so I brought but the Gods.

I wish to see you more than before I failed. Will you tell me your health? I am surprised and anxious since receiving your note.

The only news I know
Is bulletins all day
From Immortality.

Can you render my pencil? The physician has taken away my pen.

I inclose the address from a letter, lest my figures fail.

Knowledge of your recovery would excel my own.

E. Dickinson.

Later this arrived: —

DEAR FRIEND, — I think of you so wholly that I cannot resist to write again, to ask if you are safe? Danger is not at first, for then we are unconscious, but in the after, slower days.

Do not try to be saved, but let redemption find you, as it certainly will. Love is its own rescue; for we, at our supremest, are but its trembling emblems.

YOUR SCHOLAR.

These were my earliest letters from Emily Dickinson, in their order. From this time and up to her death (May 15, 1886) we corresponded at varying intervals, she always persistently keeping up this attitude of "Scholar," and assuming on my part a preceptorship which it is almost needless to say did not exist. Always glad to hear her "recite," as she called it, I soon abandoned all attempt to guide in the slightest degree this extraordinary nature, and simply accepted her confidences, giving as much as I could of what might interest her in return.

Sometimes there would be a long pause, on my part, after which would come a plaintive letter, always terse, like this: —

"Did I displease you? But won't you tell me how?"

Or perhaps the announcement of some event, vast in her small sphere, as this: —

AMHERST.

Carlo died. E. DICKINSON.
Would you instruct me now?

Or sometimes there would arrive an exquisite little detached strain, every word a picture, like this: —

THE HUMMING-BIRD

A route of evanescence
With a revolving wheel;
A resonance of emerald;
A rush of cochineal.
And every blossom on the bush
Adjusts its tumbled head; —
The mail from Tunis, probably,
An easy morning's ride.

Nothing in literature, I am sure, so condenses into a few words that gorgeous atom of life and fire of which she here attempts the description. It is, however, needless to conceal that many of her brilliant fragments were less satisfying. She almost always grasped whatever she sought, but with some fracture of grammar and dictionary on the way. Often, too, she was obscure, and sometimes inscrutable; and though obscurity is sometimes, in Coleridge's phrase, a compliment to the reader, yet it is never safe to press this compliment too hard.

Sometimes, on the other hand, her verses found too much favor for her comfort, and she

was urged to publish. In such cases I was sometimes put forward as a defense; and the following letter was the fruit of some such occasion:

DEAR FRIEND, — Thank you for the advice. I shall implicitly follow it.

The one who asked me for the lines I had never seen.

He spoke of "a charity." I refused, but did not inquire. He again earnestly urged, on the ground that in that way I might "aid unfortunate children." The name of "child" was a snare to me, and I hesitated, choosing my most rudimentary, and without criterion.

I inquired of you. You can scarcely estimate the opinion to one utterly guideless. Again thank you.

YOUR SCHOLAR.

Again came this, on a similar theme: —

DEAR FRIEND, — Are you willing to tell me what is right? Mrs. Jackson, of Colorado ["H. H.," her early schoolmate], was with me a few moments this week, and wished me to write for this. [A circular of the "No Name Series" was inclosed.] I told her I was unwilling, and she asked me why? I said I was incapable, and she seemed not to believe me and asked me not to decide for a few days. Meantime, she would write me. She was so sweetly noble, I would regret to estrange her, and if you would be willing to give me a note saying you disapproved it, and thought me unfit, she would believe you. I am

sorry to flee so often to my safest friend, but hope he permits me.

In all this time — nearly eight years — we had never met, but she had sent invitations like the following :—

AMHERST.

DEAR FRIEND, — Whom my dog understood could not elude others.

I should be so glad to see you, but think it an apparitional pleasure, not to be fulfilled. I am uncertain of Boston.

I had promised to visit my physician for a few days in May, but father objects because he is in the habit of me.

Is it more far to Amherst?

You will find a minute host, but a spacious welcome. . . .

If I still entreat you to teach me, are you much displeased? I will be patient, constant, never reject your knife, and should my slowness goad you, you knew before myself that

> Except the smaller size
> No lives are round.
> These hurry to a sphere
> And show and end.
> The larger slower grow
> And later hang;
> The summers of Hesperides
> Are long.

Afterwards, came this :—

AMHERST.

DEAR FRIEND, — A letter always feels to me like immortality because it is the mind alone without corporeal friend. Indebted in our talk to attitude and accent, there seems a spectral power in thought that walks alone. I would like to thank you for your great kindness, but never try to lift the words which I cannot hold.

Should you come to Amherst, I might then succeed, though gratitude is the timid wealth of those who have nothing. I am sure that you speak the truth, because the noble do, but your letters always surprise me.

My life has been too simple and stern to embarrass any. "Seen of Angels," scarcely my responsibility.

It is difficult not to be fictitious in so fair a place, but tests' severe repairs are permitted all.

When a little girl I remember hearing that remarkable passage and preferring the "Power," not knowing at the time that "Kingdom" and "Glory" were included.

You noticed my dwelling alone. To an emigrant, country is idle except it be his own. You speak kindly of seeing me; could it please your convenience to come so far as Amherst, I should be very glad, but I do not cross my father's ground to any house or town.

Of our greatest acts we are ignorant. You were not aware that you saved my life. To thank you in person has been since then one of my few requests.

. . . You will excuse each that I say, because no one taught me.

At last, after many postponements, on August 16, 1870, I found myself face to face with my hitherto unseen correspondent. It was at her father's house, one of those large, square, brick mansions so familiar in our older New England towns, surrounded by trees and blossoming shrubs without, and within exquisitely neat, cool, spacious, and fragrant with flowers. After a little delay, I heard an extremely faint and pattering footstep like that of a child, in the hall, and in glided, almost noiselessly, a plain, shy little person, the face without a single good feature, but with eyes, as she herself said, "like the sherry the guest leaves in the glass," and with smooth bands of reddish chestnut hair. She had a quaint and nun-like look, as if she might be a German canoness of some religious order, whose prescribed garb was white piqué, with a blue net worsted shawl. She came toward me with two day-lilies, which she put in a childlike way into my hand, saying softly, under her breath, "These are my introduction," and adding, also under her breath, in childlike fashion, "Forgive me if I am frightened; I never see strangers, and hardly know what I say." But soon she began to talk, and thenceforward con-

tinued almost constantly; pausing sometimes to beg that I would talk instead, but readily recommencing when I evaded. There was not a trace of affectation in all this; she seemed to speak absolutely for her own relief, and wholly without watching its effect on her hearer. Led on by me, she told much about her early life, in which her father was always the chief figure, —evidently a man of the old type, *la vieille roche* of Puritanism, — a man who, as she said, read on Sunday "lonely and rigorous books"; and who had from childhood inspired her with such awe, that she never learned to tell time by the clock till she was fifteen, simply because he had tried to explain it to her when she was a little child, and she had been afraid to tell him that she did not understand, and also afraid to ask any one else lest he should hear of it. Yet she had never heard him speak a harsh word, and it needed only a glance at his photograph to see how truly the Puritan tradition was preserved in him. He did not wish his children, when little, to read anything but the Bible; and when, one day, her brother brought her home Longfellow's "Kavanagh," he put it secretly under the pianoforte cover, made signs to her, and they both afterwards read it. It may have been before this, however, that a student of her father's was amazed to find that she and her

brother had never heard of Lydia Maria Child, then much read, and he brought "Letters from New York," and hid it in the great bush of old-fashioned tree-box beside the front door. After the first book, she thought in ecstasy, "This, then, is a book, and there are more of them." But she did not find so many as she expected, for she afterwards said to me, "When I lost the use of my eyes, it was a comfort to think that there were so few real books that I could easily find one to read me all of them." Afterwards, when she regained her eyes, she read Shakespeare, and thought to herself, "Why is any other book needed?"

She went on talking constantly and saying, in the midst of narrative, things quaint and aphoristic. "Is it oblivion or absorption when things pass from our minds?" "Truth is such a rare thing, it is delightful to tell it." "I find ecstasy in living; the mere sense of living is joy enough." When I asked her if she never felt any want of employment, not going off the grounds and rarely seeing a visitor, she answered, "I never thought of conceiving that I could ever have the slightest approach to such a want in all future time"; and then added, after a pause, "I feel that I have not expressed myself strongly enough," although it seemed to me that she had. She told me of her household

occupations, that she made all their bread, because her father liked only hers; then saying shyly, "And people must have puddings," this very timidly and suggestively, as if they were meteors or comets. Interspersed with these confidences came phrases so emphasized as to seem the very wantonness of over-statement, as if she pleased herself with putting into words what the most extravagant might possibly think without saying, as thus: "How do most people live without any thoughts? There are many people in the world, — you must have noticed them in the street, — how do they live? How do they get strength to put on their clothes in the morning?" Or this crowning extravaganza: "If I read a book and it makes my whole body so cold no fire can ever warm me, I know that is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry. These are the only ways I know it. Is there any other way?"

I have tried to describe her just as she was, with the aid of notes taken at the time; but this interview left our relation very much what it was before; — on my side an interest that was strong and even affectionate, but not based on any thorough comprehension; and on her side a hope, always rather baffled, that I should afford some aid in solving her abstruse problem of life.

The impression undoubtedly made on me was that of an excess of tension, and of something abnormal. Perhaps in time I could have got beyond that somewhat overstrained relation which not my will, but her needs, had forced upon us. Certainly I should have been most glad to bring it down to the level of simple truth and every-day comradeship; but it was not altogether easy. She was much too enigmatical a being for me to solve in an hour's interview, and an instinct told me that the slightest attempt at direct cross-examination would make her withdraw into her shell; I could only sit still and watch, as one does in the woods; I must name my bird without a gun, as recommended by Emerson.

After my visit came this letter:—

Enough is so vast a sweetness, I suppose it never occurs, only pathetic counterfeits.

Fabulous to me as the men of the Revelations who "shall not hunger any more." Even the possible has its insoluble particle.

After you went, I took "Macbeth" and turned to "Birnam Wood." Came twice "To Dunsinane." I thought and went about my work. . . .

The vein cannot thank the artery, but her solemn indebtedness to him, even the stolidest admit, and so of me who try, whose effort leaves no sound.

You ask great questions accidentally. To an-

swer them would be events. I trust that you are safe.

I ask you to forgive me for all the ignorance I had. I find no nomination sweet as your low opinion.

Speak, if but to blame your obedient child.

You told me of Mrs. Lowell's poems. Would you tell me where I could find them, or are they not for sight? An article of yours, too, perhaps the only one you wrote that I never knew. It was about a "Latch." Are you willing to tell me? [Perhaps "A Sketch."]

If I ask too much, you could please refuse. Shortness to live has made me bold.

Abroad is close to-night and I have but to lift my hands to touch the "Heights of Abraham."

DICKINSON.

When I said, at parting, that I would come again some time, she replied, "Say, in a long time; that will be nearer. Some time is no time." We met only once again, and I have no express record of the visit. We corresponded for years, at long intervals, her side of the intercourse being, I fear, better sustained; and she sometimes wrote also to my wife, inclosing flowers or fragrant leaves with a verse or two. Once she sent her one of George Eliot's books, I think "Middlemarch," and wrote, "I am bringing you a little granite book for you to lean upon." At other times she would send single poems, such as these: —

## THE BLUE JAY

No brigadier throughout the year
So civic as the jay.
A neighbor and a warrior too,
With shrill felicity
Pursuing winds that censure us
A February Day,
The brother of the universe
Was never blown away.
The snow and he are intimate;
I 've often seen them play
When heaven looked upon us all
With such severity
I felt apology were due
To an insulted sky
Whose pompous frown was nutriment
To their temerity.
The pillow of this daring head
Is pungent evergreens;
His larder — terse and militant —
Unknown, refreshing things;
His character — a tonic;
His future — a dispute;
Unfair an immortality
That leaves this neighbor out.

## THE WHITE HEAT

Dare you see a soul at the white heat?
Then crouch within the door;
Red is the fire's common tint,
But when the vivid ore

Has sated flame's conditions,
  Its quivering substance plays
Without a color, but the light
  Of unanointed blaze.

Least village boasts its blacksmith,
  Whose anvil's even din
Stands symbol for the finer forge
  That soundless tugs within,

Refining these impatient ores
  With hammer and with blaze,
Until the designated light
  Repudiate the forge.

Then came the death of her father, that strong Puritan father who had communicated to her so much of the vigor of his own nature, and who bought her many books, but begged her not to read them. Mr. Edward Dickinson, after service in the national House of Representatives and other public positions, had become a member of the lower house of the Massachusetts legislature. The session was unusually prolonged, and he was making a speech upon some railway question at noon, one very hot day (July 16, 1874), when he became suddenly faint and sat down. The house adjourned, and a friend walked with him to his lodgings at the Tremont House, where he began to pack his bag for home, after sending for a physician,

but died within three hours. Soon afterwards, I received the following letter: —

The last afternoon that my father lived, though with no premonition, I preferred to be with him, and invented an absence for mother, Vinnie [her sister] being asleep. He seemed peculiarly pleased, as I oftenest stayed with myself; and remarked, as the afternoon withdrew, he "would like it to not end."

His pleasure almost embarrassed me, and my brother coming, I suggested they walk. Next morning I woke him for the train, and saw him no more.

His heart was pure and terrible, and I think no other like it exists.

I am glad there is immortality, but would have tested it myself, before entrusting him. Mr. Bowles was with us. With that exception, I saw none. I have wished for you, since my father died, and had you an hour unengrossed, it would be almost priceless. Thank you for each kindness. . . .

Later she wrote: —

When I think of my father's lonely life and lonelier death, there is this redress —

> Take all away;
> The only thing worth larceny
> Is left — the immortality.

My earliest friend wrote me the week before he

died, "If I live, I will go to Amherst; if I die, I certainly will."

Is your house deeper off? YOUR SCHOLAR.

A year afterwards came this: —

DEAR FRIEND, — Mother was paralyzed Tuesday, a year from the evening father died. I thought perhaps you would care. YOUR SCHOLAR.

With this came the following verse, having a curious seventeenth-century flavor: —

"A death-blow is a life-blow to some,
Who, till they died, did not alive become;
Who, had they lived, had died, but when
They died, vitality begun."

And later came this kindred memorial of one of the oldest and most faithful friends of the family, Mr. Samuel Bowles, of the Springfield "Republican": —

DEAR FRIEND, — I felt it shelter to speak to you.

My brother and sister are with Mr. Bowles, who is buried this afternoon.

The last song that I heard — that was, since the birds — was "He leadeth me, he leadeth me; yea, though I walk" — then the voices stooped, the arch was so low.

After this added bereavement the inward life of the diminished household became only more

concentrated, and the world was held farther and farther away. Yet to this period belongs the following letter, written about 1880, which has more of what is commonly called the objective or external quality than any she ever wrote me; and shows how close might have been her observation and her sympathy, had her rare qualities taken a somewhat different channel: —

DEAR FRIEND, — I was touchingly reminded of [a child who had died] this morning by an Indian woman with gay baskets and a dazzling baby, at the kitchen door. Her little boy "once died," she said, death to her dispelling him. I asked her what the baby liked, and she said "to step." The prairie before the door was gay with flowers of hay, and I led her in. She argued with the birds, she leaned on clover walls and they fell, and dropped her. With jargon sweeter than a bell, she grappled buttercups, and they sank together, the buttercups the heaviest. What sweetest use of days! 'T was noting some such scene made Vaughan humbly say, —

"My days that are at best but dim and hoary."

I think it was Vaughan. . . .

And these few fragmentary memorials — closing, like every human biography, with funerals, yet with such as were to Emily Dickinson only the stately introduction to a

higher life — may well end with her description of the death of the very summer she so loved.

"As imperceptibly as grief
The summer lapsed away,
Too imperceptible at last
To feel like perfidy.

"A quietness distilled,
As twilight long begun,
Or Nature spending with herself
Sequestered afternoon.

"The dusk drew earlier in,
The morning foreign shone,
A courteous yet harrowing grace
As guest that would be gone.

"And thus without a wing
Or service of a keel
Our summer made her light escape
Into the Beautiful."

# XX

# JULIA WARD HOWE

# JULIA WARD HOWE

MANY years of what may be called intimacy with Mrs. Julia Ward Howe do not impair one's power of painting her as she is, and this for two reasons: first, because she does not care to be portrayed in any other way; and secondly, because her freshness of temperament is so inexhaustible as to fix one's attention always on what she said or did not merely yesterday, but this morning. After knowing her more than forty years, and having been fellow member or officer in half-a-dozen clubs with her, first and last, during that time, I now see in her, not merely the woman of to-day, but the woman who went through the education of wifehood and motherhood, of reformer and agitator, and in all these was educated by the experience of life.

She lived to refute much early criticism or hasty judgment, and this partly from inward growth, partly because the society in which she moved was growing for itself and understood her better. The wife of a reformer is apt to be tested by the obstacles her husband encounters; if she is sympathetic, she shares his

difficulties, and if not, is perhaps criticised by the very same people for not sharing his zeal. Mrs. Howe, moreover, came to Boston at a time when all New Yorkers were there regarded with a slight distrust; she bore and reared five children, and doubtless, like all good mothers, had methods of her own; she went into company, and was criticised by cliques which did not applaud. Whatever she did, she might be in many eyes the object of prejudice. Beyond all, there was, I suspect, a slight uncertainty in her own mind that was reflected in her early poems.

From the moment when she came forward in the Woman Suffrage Movement, however, there was a visible change; it gave a new brightness to her face, a new cordiality in her manner, made her calmer, firmer; she found herself among new friends and could disregard old critics. Nothing can be more frank and characteristic than her own narrative of her first almost accidental participation in a woman's suffrage meeting. She had strayed into the hall, still not half convinced, and was rather reluctantly persuaded to take a seat on the platform, although some of her best friends were there, — Garrison, Phillips, and James Freeman Clarke, her pastor. But there was also Lucy Stone, who had long been the object of imagi-

nary disapproval; and yet Mrs. Howe, like every one else who heard Lucy Stone's sweet voice for the first time, was charmed and half won by it. I remember the same experience at a New York meeting in the case of Helen Hunt, who went to such a meeting on purpose to write a satirical letter about it for the New York "Tribune," but said to me, as we came out together, "Do you suppose I could ever write a word against anything which that woman wishes to have done?" Such was the influence of that first meeting on Mrs. Howe. "When they requested me to speak," she says, "I could only say, I am with you. I have been with them ever since, and have never seen any reason to go back from the pledge then given." She adds that she had everything to learn with respect to public speaking, the rules of debate, and the management of her voice, she having hitherto spoken in parlors only. In the same way she was gradually led into the wider sphere of women's congresses, and at last into the presidency of the woman's department at the great World's Fair at New Orleans, in the winter of 1883–84, at which she presided with great ability, organizing a series of short talks on the exhibits, to be given by experts. While in charge of this, she held a special meeting in the colored people's department, where the "Battle Hymn" was

sung, and she spoke to them of Garrison, Sumner, and Dr. Howe. Her daughter's collection of books written by women was presented to the Ladies' Art Association of New Orleans, and her whole enterprise was a singular triumph. In dealing with public enterprises in all parts of the country she soon made herself welcome everywhere. And yet this was the very woman who had written in the "Salutatory" of her first volume of poems: —

> "I was born 'neath a clouded star,
> More in shadow than light have grown;
> Loving souls are not like trees
> That strongest and stateliest shoot alone."

The truth is, that the life of a reformer always affords some training; either giving it self-control or marring it altogether, — more frequently the former; it was at any rate eminently so with her. It could be truly said, in her case, that to have taken up reform was a liberal education.

Added to this was the fact that as her children grew, they filled and educated the domestic side of her life. One of her most attractive poems is that in which she describes herself as going out for exercise on a rainy day and walking round her house, looking up each time at the window where her children were watching

with merry eagerness for the successive glimpses of her. This is the poem I mean: —

### THE HEART'S ASTRONOMY

This evening, as the twilight fell,
My younger children watched for me;
Like cherubs in the window framed,
I saw the smiling group of three.

While round and round the house I trudged,
Intent to walk a weary mile,
Oft as I passed within their range,
The little things would beck and smile.

They watched me, as Astronomers,
Whose business lies in heaven afar,
Await, beside the slanting glass,
The reappearance of a star.

Not so, not so, my pretty ones!
Seek stars in yonder cloudless sky,
But mark no steadfast path for me, —
A comet dire and strange am I.

. . . . . .

And ye, beloved ones, when ye know
What wild, erratic natures are,
Pray that the laws of heavenly force
Would hold and guide the Mother star.

I remember well that household of young people in successive summers at Newport, as

they grew towards maturity; how they in turn came back from school and college, each with individual tastes and gifts, full of life, singing, dancing, reciting, poetizing, and one of them, at least, with a talent for cookery which delighted all Newport; then their wooings and marriages, always happy; their lives always busy; their temperaments so varied. These are the influences under which "wild erratic natures" grow calm.

A fine training it was also, for these children themselves, to see their mother one of the few who could unite all kinds of friendship in the same life. Having herself the *entrée* of whatever the fashion of Newport could in those days afford; entertaining brilliant or showy guests from New York, Washington, London, or Paris; her doors were as readily open at the same time to the plainest or most modest reformer — abolitionist, woman suffragist, or Quaker; and this as a matter of course, without struggle. I remember the indignation over this of a young visitor from Italy, one of her own kindred, who was in early girlhood so independently un-American that she came to this country only through defiance. Her brother had said to her after one of her tirades, "Why do you not go there and see for yourself?" She responded, "So I will," and sailed the next week. Once arrived, she

antagonized everything, and I went in one day and found her reclining in a great armchair, literally half buried in some forty volumes of Balzac which had just been given her as a birthday present. She was cutting the leaves of the least desirable volume, and exclaimed to me, "I take refuge in Balzac from the heartlessness of American society." Then she went on to denounce this society freely, but always excepted eagerly her hostess, who was "too good for it"; and only complained of her that she had at that moment in the house two young girls, daughters of an eminent reformer, who were utterly out of place, she said, — knowing neither how to behave, how to dress, nor how to pronounce. Never in my life, I think, did I hear a denunciation more honorable to its object, especially when coming from such a source.

I never have encountered, at home or abroad, a group of people so cultivated and agreeable as existed for a few years in Newport in the summers. There were present, as intellectual and social forces, not merely the Howes, but such families as the Bancrofts, the Warings, the Partons, the Potters, the Woolseys, the Hunts, the Rogerses, the Hartes, the Hollands, the Goodwins, Kate Field, and others besides, who were readily brought together for any intellectual enjoyment. No one was the recog-

nized leader, though Mrs. Howe came nearest to it; but they met as cheery companions, nearly all of whom have passed away. One also saw at their houses some agreeable companions and foreign notabilities, as when Mr. Bancroft entertained the Emperor and Empress of Brazil, passing under an assumed name, but still attended by a veteran maid, who took occasion to remind everybody that her Majesty was a Bourbon, with no amusing result except that one good lady and experienced traveler bent one knee for an instant in her salutation. The nearest contact of this circle with the unequivocally fashionable world was perhaps when Mrs. William B. Astor, the mother of the present representative of that name in England, and herself a lover of all things intellectual, came among us.

It was in the midst of all this circle that the "Town and Country Club" was formed, of which Mrs. Howe was president and I had the humbler functions of vice-president, and it was under its auspices that the festival indicated in the following programme took place, at the always attractive seaside house of the late Mr. and Mrs. John W. Bigelow, of New York. The plan was modeled after the Harvard Commencement exercises, and its Latin programme, prepared by Professor Lane, then one of the high-

est classical authorities in New England, gave a list of speakers and subjects, the latter almost all drawn from Mrs. Howe's ready wit.

Q · B · F · F · F · Q · S
Feminae Inlustrissimae
Praestantissimae · Doctissimae · Peritissimae
Omnium · Scientarvum · Doctrici
Omnium · Bonarum · Artium · Magistrae
Dominae
IULIA · WARD · HOWE
Praesidi · Magnificentissimae

Viro · Honoratissimo
Duci · Fortissimo
In · Litteris · Humanioribus · Optime · Versato
Domi · Militiaeque · Gloriam · Insignem · Nacto
Domino
Thomae · Wentworth · Higginsoni
Propraesidi · Vigilanti

Necnon · Omnibus · Sodalibus
Societatis · Urbanoruralis
Feminis · et · Viris · Ornatissimis

Aliisque · Omnibus · Ubicumque · Terrarum
Quibus · Hae · Litterae · Pervenerint
Salutem · In · Domino · Sempiternam

Quoniam · Feminis · Praenobilissimis
Dominae · Annae · Bigelow
Dominae · Mariae · Annae · Mott
Clementia · Doctrina · Humanitate · Semper · Insignibus
Societatem · Urbanoruralem
Ad · Sollemnia · Festive · Concelebranda

Invitare · Singulari · Benignitate · Placuit
Ergo
Per · Has · Litteras · Omnibus · Notum · Sit · Quod
Comitia · Sollemnia
In · Aedibus · Bigelovensibus
Novi Portus
Ante · Diem · VIIII Kalendas · Septembres
Anno · Salutis · CIↃ · IↃ · CCC · L XXXI
Hora Quinta Postmeridiana
Qua · par · est · dignitate · habebuntur

*Oratores hoc ordine dicturi sunt, praeter eos qui ualetudine uel alia causa impediti excusantur.*

I. Disquisitio Latina. "De Germanorum lingua et litteris." Carolus Timotheus Brooks.

II. Disquisitio Theologica. "How to sacrifice an Irish Bull to a Greek Goddess." Thomas Wentworth Higginson.

III. Dissertatio Rustica. "Social Small Potatoes; and how to enlarge their eyes." Georgius Edvardus Waring.

IV. Thesis Rhinosophica. "Our Noses, and What to do with them." Francisca Filix Parton, Iacobi Uxor.

V. Disquisitio Linguistica. "Hebrew Roots, with a plan of a new Grubbarium." Guilielmus Watson Goodwin.

VI. Poema. "The Pacific Woman." Franciscus Bret Harte.

VII. Oratio Historica. "The Ideal New York Alderman." Iacobus Parton.

Exercitationibus litterariis ad finem perductis, gradus honorarii Praesidis auspiciis augustissimis rite conferentur.

Mercurii Typis

I remember how I myself distrusted this particular project, which was wholly hers. When she began to plan out the "parts" in advance, — the Rev. Mr. Brooks, the foremost of German translators, with his Teutonic themes; the agricultural Waring with his potatoes; Harte on Pacific women; Parton with his New York aldermen, and I myself with two recent papers mingled in one, — I ventured to remonstrate. "They will not write these Commencement orations," I said. "Then I will write them," responded Mrs. Howe, firmly. "They will not deliver them," I said. "Then I will deliver them," she replied; and so, in some cases, she practically did. She and I presided, dividing between us the two parts of Professor Goodwin's Oxford gown for our official adornment, to enforce the dignity of the occasion, and the *Societas Urbanoruralis*, or Town and Country Club, proved equal to the occasion. An essay on "rhinosophy" was given by "Fanny Fern" (Mrs. Parton), which was illustrated on the blackboard by this equation, written slowly by Mrs. Howe and read impressively: —

"Nose + nose + nose = proboscis
Nose — nose — nose = snub."

She also sang a song occasionally, and once called up a class for recitations from Mother

Goose in six different languages; Professor Goodwin beginning with a Greek version of "The Man in the Moon," and another Harvard man (now Dr. Gorham Bacon) following up with

> "Heu! iter didilum
> Felis cum fidulum
> Vacca transiluit lunam.
> Caniculus ridet
> Quum talem videt
> Et dish ambulavit cum spoonam."

The question being asked by Mrs. Howe whether this last line was in strict accordance with grammar, the scholar gave the following rule: "The conditions of grammar should always give way to exigencies of rhyme." In conclusion, two young girls, Annie Bigelow and Mariana Mott, were called forward to receive graduate degrees for law and medicine; the former's announcement coming in this simple form: "Annie Bigelow, my little lamb, I welcome you to a long career at the ba-a."

That time is long past, but "The Hurdy-Gurdy," or any one of the later children's books by Mrs. Howe's daughter, Mrs. Laura Richards, will give a glimpse at the endless treasury of daring fun which the second generation of that family inherited from their mother in her prime; which last gift, indeed, has lasted pretty

well to the present day. It was, we must remember, never absolutely out of taste; but it must be owned that she would fearlessly venture on half-a-dozen poor jokes for one good one. Such a risk she feared not to take at any moment, beyond any woman I ever knew. Nature gave her a perpetual youth, and what is youth if it be not fearless?

In her earlier Newport period she was always kind and hospitable, sometimes dreamy and forgetful, not always tactful. Bright things always came readily to her lips, and a second thought sometimes came too late to withhold a bit of sting. When she said to an artist who had at one time painted numerous portraits of one large and well-known family, "Mr. ——, given age and sex, could you create a Cabot?" it gave no cause for just complaint, because the family likeness was so pervasive that he would have grossly departed from nature had he left it out. But I speak rather of the perils of human intercourse, especially from a keen and ready hostess, where there is not time to see clearly how one's hearers may take a phrase. Thus when, in the deep valley of what was then her country seat, she was guiding her guests down, one by one, she suddenly stopped beside a rock or fountain and exclaimed, — for she never premeditated things, — "Now, let each of us tell

a short story while we rest ourselves here!" The next to arrive was a German baron well known in Newport and Cambridge, — a great authority in entomology, who always lamented that he had wasted his life by undertaking so large a theme as the diptera or two-winged insects, whereas the study of any one family of these, as the flies or mosquitoes, gave enough occupation for a man's whole existence, — and he, prompt to obedience, told a lively little German anecdote. "Capital, capital!" said our hostess, clapping her hands merrily and looking at two ladies just descended on the scene. "Tell it again, Baron, for these ladies; *tell it in English.*" It was accordingly done, but I judged from the ladies' faces that they would have much preferred to hear it in German, as others had done, even if they missed nine tenths of the words. Very likely the speaker herself may have seen her error at the next moment, but in a busy life one must run many risks. I doubt not she sometimes lost favor with a strange guest, in those days, by the very quickness which gave her no time for second thought. Yet, after all, of what quickness of wit may not this be said? Time, practice, the habit of speaking in public meetings or presiding over them, these helped to array all her quick-wittedness on the side of tact and courtesy.

Mrs. Howe was one of the earliest contributors to the "Atlantic Monthly." Her poem "Hamlet at the Boston" appeared in the second year of the magazine, in February, 1859, and her "Trip to Cuba" appeared in six successive numbers in that and the following volume. Her poem "The Last Bird" also appeared in one of these volumes, after which there was an interval of two and a half years during which her contributions were suspended. Several more of her poems came out in volume viii (1861), and the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" in the number for February, 1862 (ix, 145). During the next two years there appeared six numbers of a striking series called "Lyrics of the Street." Most of these poems, with others, were included in a volume called "Later Lyrics" (1865). She had previously, however, in 1853, published her first volume of poems, entitled "Passion Flowers"; and these volumes were at a later period condensed into one by her daughters, with some omissions,—not always quite felicitous, as I think,—this definitive volume bearing the name "From Sunset Ridge" (1898).

Mrs. Howe, like her friend Dr. Holmes, has perhaps had the disappointing experience of concentrating her sure prospects of fame on a single poem. What the "Chambered Nautilus" represents in his published volumes, the "Bat-

tle Hymn of the Republic" represents for her. In each case the poet was happy enough to secure, through influences impenetrable, one golden moment. Even this poem, in Mrs. Howe's case, was not (although many suppose otherwise) a song sung by all the soldiers. The resounding lyric of "John Brown's Body" reached them much more readily, but the "Battle Hymn" will doubtless survive all the rest of the rather disappointing metrical products of the war. For the rest of her poems, they are rarely quite enough concentrated; they reach our ears attractively, but not with positive mastery. Of the war songs, the one entitled "Our Orders" was perhaps the finest, — that which begins, —

> "Weave no more silks, ye Lyons looms,
> To deck our girls for gay delights!
> The crimson flower of battle blooms,
> And solemn marches fill the night."

"Hamlet at the Boston" is a strong and noble poem, as is "The Last Bird," which has a flavor of Bryant about it. "Eros has Warning" and "Eros Departs" are two of the profoundest; and so is the following, which I have always thought her most original and powerful poem after the "Battle Hymn," in so far that I ventured to supply a feebler supplement to it on a late birthday.

It is to be remembered that in the game of "Rouge et Noir" the announcement by the dealer, "Rouge gagne," implies that the red wins, while the phrase "Donner de la couleur" means simply to follow suit and accept what comes.

## ROUGE GAGNE

The wheel is turned, the cards are laid;
The circle 's drawn, the bets are paid:
I stake my gold upon the red.

The rubies of the bosom mine,
The river of life, so swift divine,
In red all radiantly shine.

Upon the cards, like gouts of blood,
Lie dinted hearts, and diamonds good,
The red for faith and hardihood.

In red the sacred blushes start
On errand from a virgin heart,
To win its glorious counterpart.

The rose that makes the summer fair,
The velvet robe that sovereigns wear
The red revealment could not spare.

And men who conquer deadly odds
By fields of ice and raging floods,
Take the red passion from the gods.

Now Love is red, and Wisdom pale,
But human hearts are faint and frail
Till Love meets Love, and bids it hail.

I see the chasm, yawning dread;
I see the flaming arch o'erhead:
I stake my life upon the red.

This was my daring supplement, which appeared in the "Atlantic Monthly" (Contributors' Club) for October, 1906.

LA COULEUR

"I stake my life upon the red!"
With hair still golden on her head,
Dame Julia of the Valley said.

But Time for her has plans not told,
And while her patient years unfold
They yield the white and not the gold.

Where Alpine summits loftiest lie,
The brown, the green, the red pass by,
And whitest top is next the sky.

And now with meeker garb bedight,
Dame Julia sings in loftier light,
"I stake my life upon the white!"

Turning to Mrs. Howe's prose works, one finds something of the same obstruction, here and there, from excess of material. Her autobiography, entitled "Reminiscences," might

easily, in the hands of Mr. M. D. Conway, for instance, have been spread out into three or four interesting octavos; but in her more hurried grasp it is squeezed into one volume, where groups of delightful interviews with heroes at home and abroad are crowded into some single sentence. Her lectures are better arranged and less tantalizing, and it would be hard to find a book in American literature better worth reprinting and distributing than the little volume containing her two addresses on "Modern Society." In wit, in wisdom, in anecdote, I know few books so racy. Next to it is the lecture "Is Polite Society Polite?" so keen and pungent that it is said a young man was once heard inquiring for Mrs. Howe after hearing it, in a country town, and when asked why he wished to see her, replied, "Well, I did put my brother in the poorhouse, and now that I have heard Mrs. Howe, I suppose that I must take him out." In the large collection of essays comprised in the same volume with this, there are papers on Paris and on Greece which are full of the finest flavor of anecdote, sympathy, and memory, while here and there in all her books one meets with glimpses of Italy which remind one of that scene on the celebration of the birthday of Columbus, when she sat upon the platform of Faneuil Hall, the

only woman, and gave forth sympathetic talk in her gracious way to the loving Italian audience, which gladly listened to their own sweet tongue from her. Then, as always, she could trust herself freely in speech, for she never spoke without fresh adaptation to the occasion, and her fortunate memory for words and names is unimpaired at ninety.

Since I am here engaged upon a mere sketch of Mrs. Howe, not a formal memoir, I have felt free to postpone until this time the details of her birth and parentage. She was the daughter of Samuel and Julia Rush (Cutler) Ward, and was born at the house of her parents in the Bowling Green, New York city, on May 27, 1819. She was married on April 14, 1843, at nearly twenty-four years of age, to Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, whom she had met on visits to Boston. They soon went to Europe,— the first of many similar voyages, — where her eldest daughter, Julia Romana, was born during the next spring. This daughter was the author of a volume of poems entitled "Stray Clouds," and of a description of the Summer School of Philosophy at Concord entitled "Philosophiæ Quæstor," and was the founder of a metaphysical club of which she was president. She became the wife of the late Michael Anagnos, of Greek origin, her father's successor

in charge of the Institution for the Blind, and the news of her early death was received with general sorrow. Mrs. Howe's second daughter was named Florence Marion, became in 1871 the wife of David Prescott Hall, of the New York Bar, and was author of "Social Customs" and "The Correct Thing," being also a frequent speaker before the women's clubs. Mrs. Howe's third daughter, Mrs. Laura E. Richards, was married in the same year to Henry Richards, of Gardiner, Maine, a town named for the family of Mr. Richards's mother, who established there a once famous school, the Gardiner Lyceum. The younger Mrs. Richards is author of "Captain January" and other stories of very wide circulation, written primarily for her own children, and culminating in a set of nonsense books of irresistible humor illustrated by herself. Mrs. Howe's youngest daughter, Maud, distinguished for her beauty and social attractiveness, is the wife of Mr. John Elliott, an English artist, and has lived much in Italy, where she has written various books of art and literature, of which "Atalanta in the South" was the first and "Roma Beata" one of the last. Mrs. Howe's only son, Henry Marion, graduated at Harvard University in 1869 and from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1871, is a mining

engineer and expert, and is a professor in the School of Mines at Columbia University. His book on "The Metallurgy of Steel" has won for him a high reputation. It will thus be seen that Mrs. Howe has had the rare and perhaps unequaled experience of being not merely herself an author, but the mother of five children, all authors. She has many grandchildren, and even a great-grandchild, whose future career can hardly be surmised.

There was held, in honor of Mrs. Howe's eighty-sixth birthday (May 27, 1905), a meeting of the Boston Authors' Club, including a little festival whose plan was taken from the annual Welsh festival of the Eistedfodd, at which every bard of that nation brought four lines of verse —a sort of four-leaved clover—to his chief. This being tried at short notice for Mrs. Howe, there came in some sixty poems, of which I select a few, almost at random, to make up the outcome of the festival, which last did not perhaps suffer from the extreme shortness of the notice:—

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS, LIMITED

Why limit to one little four-line verse
Each birthday wish, for her we meet to honor?
Else it might take till mornrise to rehearse
All the glad homage we would lavish on her!

JOHN TOWNSEND TROWBRIDGE.

## THE "NONNA" OF MAGNA ITALIA

Within the glow shed by her heart of gold,
Warm Southern sunshine cheers our Northern skies,
And pilgrim wanderers, homesick and a-cold,
Find their loved Italy in her welcoming eyes.

VIDA D. SCUDDER.

## FIVE O'CLOCK WITH THE IMMORTALS

The Sisters Three who spin our fate
Greet Julia Ward, who comes quite late;
How Greek wit flies! They scream with glee,
Drop thread and shears, and make the tea.

E. H. CLEMENT.

Hope now abiding, faith long ago,
Never a shadow between.
White of the lilacs and white of the snow,
Seventy and sixteen.

MARY GRAY MORRISON.

In English, French, Italian, German, Greek,
Our many-gifted President can speak.
Wit, Wisdom, world-wide Knowledge grace her tongue
And she is *only* Eighty-six years young!

NATHAN HASKELL DOLE.

How to be gracious? How to be true?
Poet, and Seer, and Woman too?
To crown with Spring the Winter's brow?
Here is the answer: *this* is Howe.

MARY ELIZABETH BLAKE.

If man could change the universe
By force of epigrams in verse,
He 'd smash some idols, I allow,
But who would alter Mrs. Howe?

ROBERT GRANT.

Lady who lovest and who livest Peace,
And yet didst write Earth's noblest battle song
At Freedom's bidding, — may thy fame increase
Till dawns the warless age for which we long!

FREDERIC LAWRENCE KNOWLES.

Dot oldt Fader Time must be cutting some dricks,
Vhen he calls our goot Bresident's age eighty-six.
An octogeranium! Who would suppose?
My dear Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, der time goes!

YAWCOB STRAUSS (CHARLES FOLLEN ADAMS).

You, who are of the spring,
To whom Youth's joys *must* cling,
May all that Love can give
Beguile you long to live —
Our Queen of Hearts.

LOUISE CHANDLER MOULTON.

H ere, on this joyous day of days,
O deign to list my skill-less praise.
W hate'er be said with tongue or pen
E xtolling thee, I cry "Amen."

BEULAH MARIE DIX.

Mrs. Howe was not apprised of the project in advance, and certainly had not seen the verses; but was, at any rate, ready as usual, and this sketch may well close with her cheery answer:—

### MRS. HOWE'S REPLY

Why, bless you, I ain't nothing, nor nobody, nor much,
If you look in your Directory you 'll find a thousand such.
I walk upon the level ground, I breathe upon the air,
I study at a table and reflect upon a chair.

I know a casual mixture of the Latin and the Greek,
I know the Frenchman's *parlez-vous*, and how the Germans speak;
Well can I add, and well subtract, and say twice two is four,
But of those direful sums and proofs remember nothing more.

I wrote a poetry book one time, and then I wrote a play,
And a friend who went to see it said she fainted right away.
Then I got up high to speculate upon the Universe,
And folks who heard me found themselves no better and no worse.

Yes, I ve had a lot of birthdays and I 'm growing
very old,
That 's why they make so much of me, if once the
truth were told.
And I love the shade in summer, and in winter
love the sun,
And I 'm just learning how to live, my wisdom 's
just begun.

Don't trouble more to celebrate this natal day of
mine,
But keep the grasp of fellowship which warms us
more than wine.
Let us thank the lavish hand that gives world
beauty to our eyes,
And bless the days that saw us young, and years
that make us wise.

# XXI

# WILLIAM JAMES ROLFE

# WILLIAM JAMES ROLFE

THE "man of one book" (*homo unius libri*) whom St. Thomas Aquinas praised has now pretty nearly vanished from the world; and those men are rare, especially in our versatile America, who have deliberately chosen one department of literary work and pursued it without essential variation up to old age. Of these, Francis Parkman was the most conspicuous representative, and William James Rolfe is perhaps the most noticeable successor, — a man who, upon a somewhat lower plane than Parkman, has made for himself a permanent mark in a high region of editorship, akin to that of Furnivall and a few compeers in England. A teacher by profession all his life, his especial sphere has been the English department, a department which he may indeed be said to have created in our public schools, and thus indirectly in our colleges.

William James Rolfe, son of John and Lydia Davis (Moulton) Rolfe, was born on December 10, 1827, in Newburyport, Massachusetts, a rural city which has been the home at different times of a number of literary and public men, and is

still, by its wide, elm-shaded chief avenue and ocean outlook, found attractive by all visitors. Rolfe's boyhood, however, was passed mainly in Lowell, Massachusetts, where he was fitted for college in the high school. He spent three years at Amherst College, but found himself unable to afford to remain any longer, and engaged in school-teaching as a means of immediate support. A bankrupt country academy at Wrentham, about twenty-five miles from Boston, was offered to him rent free if he would keep a school in it, and, for want of anything better, he took it. He had to teach all the grammar and high school branches, including the fitting of boys for college, and his pupils ranged from ten years old to those two or three years older than himself. He was the only teacher, and heard from sixteen to twenty classes a day. Besides these, which included classes in Latin, French, Greek, and German, he had pupils out of school in Spanish and Italian, adding to all this the enterprise, then wholly new, of systematically teaching English with the study of standard writers. This was apparently a thing never done before that time in the whole United States.

So marked was the impression made by his mode of teaching that it led to his appointment as principal of the pioneer public high schools at

Dorchester, Massachusetts. He there required work in English of all his pupils, boys and girls alike, including those who had collegiate aims. At this time no English, as such, was required at any American college, and it was only since 1846 that Harvard had introduced even a preliminary examination, in which Worcester's "Elements of History and Elements of Geography" were added to the original departments of Latin, Greek, and mathematics. Rolfe's boys enjoyed the studies in English literature, but feared lest they might fail in the required work in classics unless they were excused from English. To relieve their anxiety and his own, their teacher wrote to Professor Felton, afterwards President of Harvard, telling him what his boys were doing in English, and asking permission to omit some portion of his Greek Reader then required for admission. Professor Felton replied, in substance, "Go ahead with the English and let the Greek take care of itself." As a result, all four of the boys entered Harvard without conditions, and it is worth noticing that they all testified that no part of their preparatory training was more valuable to them in college than this in English. It is also noticeable that the late Henry A. Clapp, of Boston, long eminent as a lecturer on Shakespeare, was one of these boys.

In the summer of 1857 Mr. Rolfe was invited to take charge of the high school at Lawrence, Massachusetts, on a larger scale than the Dorchester institution, and was again promoted after four years to Salem, and the next year to be principal of the Cambridge high school, where he remained until 1868. Since that time he has continued to reside in Cambridge, and has devoted himself to editorial and literary work. His literary labors from 1869 to the present day have been vast and varied. He has been one of the editors of the "Popular Science News" (formerly the Boston "Journal of Chemistry"), and for nearly twenty years has had charge of the department of Shakespeareana in the "Literary World" and the "Critic," to which he has also added "Poet-Lore." He has written casual articles for other periodicals. In 1865 he published a handbook of Latin poetry with J. H. Hanson, A. M., of Waterville, Maine. In 1867 he followed this by an American edition of Craik's "English of Shakespeare." Between 1867 and 1869, in connection with J. A. Gillet, he brought out the "Cambridge course" in physics, in six volumes. In 1870 he edited Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice" with such success that by 1883 he had completed an edition of all the plays in forty volumes. It has long been accepted as a standard critical authority, being

quoted as such by leading English and German editors. He was lately engaged in a thorough revision of this edition, doing this task after he had reached the age of seventy-five. He has also edited Scott's complete poems, as well as (separately) "The Lady of the Lake" and "The Lay of the Last Minstrel"; an *édition de luxe* of Tennyson's works in twelve volumes, and another, the Cambridge Edition, in one volume. He has edited volumes of selections from Milton, Gray, Goldsmith, Wordsworth, and Browning, with Mrs. Browning's "Sonnets from the Portuguese." He is also the author of "Shakespeare the Boy," with sketches of youthful life of that period; "The Satchel Guide to Europe," published anonymously for twenty-eight years; and a book on the "Elementary Study of English." With his son, John C. Rolfe, Ph. D., Professor of Latin in the University of Pennsylvania, he has edited Macaulay's "Lays of Ancient Rome." He has published a series of elementary English classics in six volumes. He has also supervised the publication of the "New Century *édition de luxe*" of Shakespeare in twenty-four volumes, besides writing for it a "Life of Shakespeare" which fills a volume of five hundred and fifty pages, now published separately. It is safe to say that no other American, and probably no Englishman, has rivaled

him for the extent, variety, and accuracy of his services as an editor.

This work may be justly divided into two parts: that dealing mainly with Shakespeare, and that with single minor authors whose complete or partial work he has reprinted. In Shakespeare he has, of course, the highest theme to dwell on, but also that in which he has been preceded by a vast series of workmen. In these his function has not been so much that of original and individual criticism as of judiciously compiling the work of predecessors, this last fact being especially true since the printing of the Furness edition. It is in dealing with the minor authors that he has been led to the discovery, at first seeming almost incredible, that the poems which most claimed the attention of the world have for that very reason been gradually most changed and perverted in printing. Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard," for instance, has appeared in polyglot editions; it has been translated fifteen times into French, thirteen into Italian, twelve times into Latin, and so on down through Greek, German, Portuguese, and Hebrew. No one poem in the English language, even by Longfellow, equals it in this respect. The editions which appeared in Gray's own time were kept correct through his own careful supervision; and the changes in successive

editions were at first those made by himself, usually improvements, as where he changed "some village Cato" to "some village Hampden," and substituted in the same verse "Milton" for "Tully" and "Cromwell" for "Cæsar." But there are many errors in Pickering's edition, and these have been followed by most American copies. It may perhaps be doubted whether Dr. Rolfe is quite correct in his opinion where he says in his preface to this ode, "No vicissitudes of taste or fashion have affected its popularity"; it is pretty certain that young people do not know it by heart so generally as they once did, and Wordsworth pronounced its dialect often "unintelligible"; but we are all under obligation to Dr. Rolfe for his careful revision of this text.

Turning now to Scott's "Lady of the Lake," which would seem next in familiarity to Gray's "Elegy," we find scores of corrections, made in Rolfe's, of errors that have crept gradually in since the edition of 1821. For instance, in Canto II, l. 685, every edition since 1821 has had "I meant not all my *heart* would say," the correct reading being "my *heat* would say." In Canto VI, l. 396, the Scottish "*boune*" has been changed to "*bound*," and eight lines below, the old word "*barded*" has become "*barbed*"; and these are but a few among many examples.

When we turn to Shakespeare, we find less direct service of this kind required than in the minor authors ; less need of the microscope. At any rate, the variations have all been thoroughly scrutinized, and no flagrant changes have come to light since the disastrous attempt in that direction of Mr. Collier in 1852. On the other hand, we come to a new class of variations, which it would have been well perhaps to have stated more clearly in the volumes where they occur ; namely, the studied omissions, in Rolfe's edition, of all indecent words or phrases. There is much to be said for and against this process of Bowdlerizing, as it was formerly called ; and those who recall the publication of the original Bowdler experiment in this line, half a century ago, and the seven editions which it went through from 1818 to 1861, can remember with what disapproval such expurgation was long regarded. Even now it is to be noticed that the new edition of reprints of the early folio Shakespeares, edited by two ladies, Misses Clarke and Porter, adopts no such method. Of course the objection to the process is on the obvious ground that concealment creates curiosity, and the great majority of copies of Shakespeare will be always unexpurgated, so that it is very easy to turn to them. Waiving this point, and assuming the spelling to be necessarily modernized,

it is difficult to conceive of any school edition done more admirably than the new issue of Mr. Rolfe's volumes of Shakespeare's works. The type is clear, the paper good, and the notes and appendices are the result of long experience. When one turns back, for instance, to the old days of Samuel Johnson's editorship, and sees the utter triviality and dullness of half the annotations of that very able man, one feels the vast space of time elapsed between his annotations and Dr. Rolfe's. This applies even to notes that seem almost trivial, and many a suggestion or bit of explanation which seems to a mere private student utterly wasted can be fully justified by cases in which still simpler points have proved seriously puzzling in the schoolroom.

It has been said that every Shakespeare critic ended with the desire to be Shakespeare's biographer, although fortunately most of them have been daunted by discouragement or the unwillingness of booksellers. Here, also, Mr. Rolfe's persistent courage has carried him through, and his work, aided by time and new discoveries, has probably portrayed, more fully than that of any of his predecessors, the airy palace in which the great enchanter dwelt. How far the occupant of the palace still remains

also a thing of air, we must leave for Miss Delia Bacon's school of heretics to determine. For myself, I prefer to believe, with Andrew Lang, that "Shakespeare's plays and poems were written by Shakespeare."

# XXII

# GÖTTINGEN AND HARVARD A CENTURY AGO

# GÖTTINGEN AND HARVARD A CENTURY AGO

"WHENE'ER with haggard eyes I view
This dungeon that I 'm rotting in,
I think of those companions true
Who studied with me at the U-
niversity of Göttingen,
niversity of Göttingen."

To the majority of Harvard graduates the chief association with Göttingen is Canning's once-famous squib, of which this is the first verse, in the "Anti-Jacobin." But the historical tie between the two universities is far too close to be forgotten; and I have lately come into possession of some quite interesting letters which demonstrate this. They show conclusively how much the development of Harvard College was influenced, nearly a century ago, by the German models, and how little in comparison by Oxford and Cambridge; and as the letters are all from men afterwards eminent, and pioneers in that vast band of American students who have since studied in Germany, their youthful opinions will possess a peculiar interest.

The three persons through whom this influ-

ence most came were Joseph Green Cogswell, Edward Everett, and George Ticknor, all then studying at Göttingen. It happens that they had all been intimate in my father's family, and as he was very much interested in the affairs of the college, — of which he became in 1818 the "Steward and Patron," and practically, as the Reverend A. P. Peabody assures us,[1] the Treasurer, — they sent some of their appeals and arguments through him. This paper will consist chiefly of extracts from these letters, which speak for themselves as to the point of view in which the whole matter presented itself.

It will be well to bear in mind the following details as to the early history of these three men, taking them in order of age. Cogswell was born in 1786, graduated (Harvard) in 1806, was tutor in 1814–15 (having previously tried mercantile life), and went abroad in 1816. Ticknor was born in 1791, graduated (Dartmouth) in 1807, went to Germany in 1815, and was appointed professor of Modern Languages at Harvard in 1817. Everett was born in 1794, graduated (Harvard) in 1811, and went abroad on his appointment as Greek professor (Harvard) in 1815.

The first of these letters is from George

[1] *Harvard Reminiscences*, by Andrew Preston Peabody, D. D., LL. D., p. 18.

Ticknor, and is a very striking appeal in behalf of the Harvard College Library, which then consisted of less than 20,000 volumes, although the largest in the United States, with perhaps one exception.

GÖTTINGEN, May 20, 1816.

As you have talked a good deal in your letter about the college and its prospects, I suppose I may be allowed to say a few words about it in reply, though to be sure I have already said more than was perhaps proper in one like myself, who am not even a graduate there, and shall very probably get no other answer to what I may venture to say hereafter than that I should do better to mind my books, and let those who are intrusted with the affairs of ye (*sic*) college take care of them. I cannot, however, shut my eyes on the fact, that one *very* important and principal cause of the difference between our University and the one here is the different value we affix to a good library, and the different ideas we have of what a good library is. In America we look on the Library at Cambridge as a wonder, and I am sure nobody ever had a more thorough veneration for it than I had; but it was not necessary for me to be here six months to find out that it is nearly or quite half a century behind the libraries of Europe, and that it is much less remarkable that our stock of learning is so small than that it is so great, considering the means from which it is drawn are so inadequate. But what

is worse than the absolute poverty of our collections of books is the relative inconsequence in which we keep them. We found new professorships and build new colleges in abundance, but we buy no books ; and yet it is to me the most obvious thing in the world that it would promote the cause of learning and the reputation of the University ten times more to give six thousand dollars a year to the Library than to found three professorships, and that it would have been wiser to have spent the whole sum that the new chapel had cost on books than on a fine suite of halls. The truth is, when we build up a literary Institution in America we think too much of convenience and comfort and luxury and show ; and too little of real, laborious study and the means that will promote it. We have not yet learnt that the Library is not only the first convenience of a University, but that it is the very first necessity, — that it is the life and spirit, — and that all other considerations must yield to the prevalent one of increasing and opening it, and opening it on the most liberal terms to *all* who are disposed to make use of it. I cannot better explain to you the difference between our University in Cambridge and the one here than by telling you that here I hardly say too much when I say that it *consists* in the Library, and that in Cambridge the Library is one of the last things thought and talked about, — that here they have forty professors and more than two hundred thousand volumes to instruct them, and in Cambridge twenty professors and less than twenty

thousand volumes. This, then, you see is the thing of which I am disposed to complain, that we give comparatively so little attention and money to the Library, which is, after all, the Alpha and Omega of the whole establishment, — that we are mortified and exasperated because we have no learned men, and yet make it *physically* impossible for our scholars to become such, and that to escape from this reproach we appoint a multitude of professors, but give them a library from which hardly one and *not* one of them can qualify himself to execute the duties of his office. You will, perhaps, say that these professors do not complain. I can only answer that you find the blind are often as gay and happy as those who are blessed with sight; but take a Cambridge professor, and let him live one year by a library as ample and as liberally administered as this is; let him know what it is to be forever sure of having the very book he wants either to read or to refer to; let him in one word *know* that he can never be discouraged from pursuing any inquiry for want of means, but on the contrary let him feel what it is to have all the excitements and assistance and encouragements which those who have gone before him in the same pursuits can give him, and then at the end of this year set him down again under the parsimonious administration of the Cambridge library, — and I will promise you that he shall be as discontented and clamorous as my argument can desire.

But I will trouble you no more with my argument,

though I am persuaded that the further progress of learning among us depends on the entire change of the system against which it is directed.

The next extract is from a letter of Cogswell's, and gives a glimpse at the actual work done by these young men: —

GÖTTINGEN, March 8, 1817.

I must tell you something about our colony at Göttingen before I discuss other subjects, for you probably care little about the University and its host of professors, except as they operate upon us. First as to the Professor (Everett) and Dr. Ticknor, as they are called here; everybody knows them in this part of Germany, and also knows how to value them. For once in my life I am proud to acknowledge myself an American on the European side of the Atlantic: never was a country more fortunate in its representation abroad than ours has been in this instance; they will gain more for us in this respect than even in the treasures of learning they will carry back. Little as I have of patriotism, I delight to listen to the character which is here given of my countrymen; I mean as countrymen, and not as my particular friends: the despondency which it produces in my own mind of ever obtaining a place by their sides is more than counterbalanced by the gratification of my national feelings, to say not a word of my individual attachment. You must not think me extravagant, but I venture to say that the notions which the European literati have entertained

of America will be essentially changed by G. and E.'s [Ticknor's and Everett's] residence on the Continent; we were known to be a brave, a rich, and an enterprising people, but that a scholar was to be found among us, or any man who had a desire to be a scholar, had scarcely been conceived. It will also be the means of producing new correspondences and connections between the men of the American and European sides of the Atlantic, and spread much more widely among us a knowledge of the present literature and science of this Continent.

Deducting the time from the 13th of December to the 27th of January during which I was confined to my room, I have been pretty industrious; through the winter I behaved as well as one could expect. German has been my chief study; to give it a relief I have attended one hour a day to a lecture in Italian on the Modern Arts, and, to feel satisfied that I had some sober inquiry in hand, I have devoted another to Professor Saalfeld's course of European Statistics, so that I have generally been able to count at night twelve hours of private study and private instruction. This has only sharpened not satisfied my appetite. I have laid out for myself a course of more diligent labors the next semester. I shall then be at least eight hours in the lecture rooms, beginning at six in the morning. I must contrive, besides, to devote eight other hours to private study. I am not in the least Germanized, and yet it appalls me when I think of the difference between

an education here and in America. The great evil with us is, in our primary schools, the best years for learning are trifled and whiled away; boys learn nothing because they have no instructors, because we demand of one the full [work?] of ten, and because laziness is the first lesson which one gets in all our great schools. I know very well that we want but few closet scholars, few learned philologists, and few verbal commentators; that all our systems of government and customs and life suppose a preparation for making practical men, — men who move, and are felt in the world; but all this could be better done without wasting every year from infancy to manhood. The system of education here is the very reverse of our own: in America boys are let loose upon the work when they are children, and fettered when they are sent to our college; here they are cloistered, too much so I acknowledge, till they can guide themselves, and then put at their own disposal at the universities. Luther's Reformation threw all the monkish establishments in the Protestant countries into the hands of the Princes, and they very wisely appropriated them to the purposes of education, but unluckily they have retained more of the monastic seclusion than they ought. The three great schools in Saxony, Pforte, Meissen, and —— are kept in convents, and the boys enjoy little more than the liberty of a cloister. They are all very famous, the first more particularly; out of it have come half of the great scholars of the country. Still they

are essentially defective in the point above named. Just in the neighborhood of Gotha is the admirable institution of Salzmann, in a delightfully pleasant and healthy valley; his number is limited to thirty-eight, and he has twelve instructors, — admits no boy who does not bring with him the fairest character: when once admitted they become his children, and the reciprocal relation is cherished with corresponding tenderness and respect. I should like to proceed a little farther in this subject, but the bottom of my paper forbids.

The following is from Ticknor again, and shows, though without giving details, that the young men had extended their observations beyond Göttingen: —

GÖTTINGEN, November 30, 1816.

DEAR SIR, — On returning here about a fortnight since, after a journey through North Germany which had occupied us about two months, I found your kind letter of August 4 waiting to welcome me. I thank you for it with all my heart, and take the first moment of leisure I can find in the busy commencement of a new term, to answer it, that I may soon have the same pleasure again.

You say you wish to hear from me what hours of relaxation I have, and what acquaintances I make, in this part of the Continent. The first is very easily told, and the last would not have been difficult before the journey from which I have just returned; but now the number is more than I can write or you

willingly hear. However, I will answer both your inquiries in the spirit in which they are made.

As to relaxation, in the sense of the word in which I used to employ it at home, — meaning the hours I lounged so happily away when the weariness of the evening came, on your sofa, and the time I used to pass with my friends in general, I know not how or why, but always gayly and thoughtlessly, — of this sort of relaxation I know nothing here but the end of an evening which I occasionally permit myself to spend with Cogswell, whose residence here has in this respect changed the whole color of my life. During the last semester, I used to visit occasionally at about twenty houses in Göttingen, chiefly as a means of learning to speak the language. As the population here is so changeable, and as every man is left to live exactly as he chooses, it is customary for all those who wish to continue their intercourse with the persons resident here to make a call at the beginning of each semester, which is considered a notice that they are still here and still mean to go into society. I, however, feel no longer the necessity of visiting for the purpose of learning German, and now that Cogswell is here cannot desire it for any other purpose; have made visits only to three or four of the professors, and shall, therefore, not go abroad at all. As to exercise, however, I have enough. Three times a day I must cross the city entirely to get my lessons. I go out twice besides, a shorter distance for dinner and a fourth lesson; and four times a week I take an

hour's exercise for conscience' sake and my mother's in the riding-school. Four times a week I make Cogswell a visit of half an hour after dinner, and three times I spend from nine to ten in the evening with him, so that I feel I am doing quite right and quite as little as I ought to do in giving up the remaining thirteen hours of the day to study, especially as I gave fourteen to it last winter without injury.

The journey we have lately taken was for the express purpose of seeing all the universities or schools of any considerable name in the country. This in a couple of months we easily accomplished, and of course saw professors, directors, and schoolmasters — men of great learning and men of little learning, and men of no learning at all — in shoals.

This is from Cogswell again, and is certainly a clarion appeal as to the need of thoroughness in teaching and learning: —

GÖTTINGEN, July 13, 1817.

I hope that you and every other person interested in the College are reconciled to Mr. Everett's plan of remaining longer in Europe than was at first intended, as I am sure you would be do you know the use he makes of his time, and the benefit you are all to derive from his learning. Before I came to Göttingen I used to wonder why it was that he wished to remain here so long; I now wonder he can consent to leave so soon. The truth is, you all mistake the cause of your impatience: you believe

that it comes from a desire of seeing him at work for and giving celebrity to the College, but it arises from a wish to have him in your society, at your dinner-tables, at your suppers, your clubs, and your ladies, at your tea-parties (you perceive I am aiming at Boston folks): however, all who have formed such expectations must be disappointed; he will find that most of these gratifications must be sacrificed to attain the objects of a scholar's ambition. What can men think when they say that two years are sufficient to make a Greek scholar? Does not everybody know that it is the labor of half a common life to learn to read the language with tolerable facility? I remember to have heard little Drisen say, a few days after I came here, that he had been spending eighteen years, at least sixteen hours a day, exclusively upon Greek, and that he could not now read a page of the tragedians without a dictionary. When I went home I struck Greek from the list of my studies; I now think no more of attaining it than I do of becoming an astrologer. In fact, the most heart-breaking circumstance attending upon human knowledge is that a man can never go any farther than "to know how little 's to be known"; it fills, then, the mind of scholars with despair to look upon the map of science, as it does that of the traveler to look upon the map of the earth, for both see what a mere speck can be traveled over, and of that speck how imperfect is the knowledge which is acquired. Let any one who believes that he has penetrated the mysteries of all science, and learnt the

powers and properties of whatever is contained in the kingdoms of air, earth, fire, and water, but just bring his knowledge to the test; let him, for example, begin with what seems the simplest of all inquiries, and enumerate the plants which grow upon the surface of the globe, and call them by their names, and, when he finds that this is beyond his limits, let him descend to a single class and bring within it all that the unfathomed caves of ocean and the unclimbed mountains bear; and as this is also higher than he can reach, let him go still lower and include only one family, or a particular species, or an individual plant, and mark his points of ignorance upon each, and then, if his pride of knowledge is not humbled enough, let him take but a leaf or the smallest part of the most common flower, and give a satisfactory solution for many of the phenomena they exhibit. But, you will ask, is Göttingen the only place for the acquisition of such learning? No, not the only, but I believe far the best for such learning as it is necessary for Mr. E. to fit him to make Cambridge in some degree a Göttingen, and render it no longer requisite to depend upon the latter for the formation of their scholars: it is true that very few of what the Germans call scholars are needed in America; if there would only be one thorough one to begin with, the number would soon be sufficient for all the uses which could be made of them, and for the literary character of the country. This one, I say, could never be formed there, because, in the first place,

there is no one who knows how it is to be done; secondly, there are no books, and then, by the habits of desultory study practiced there, are wholly incompatible with it. A man as a scholar must be completely *upset*, to use a blacksmith's phrase; he must have learnt to give up his love of society and of social pleasures, his interest in the common occurrences of life, in the political and religious contentions of the country, and in everything not directly connected with his single aim. Is there any one willing to make such a sacrifice? This I cannot answer, but I do assure you that it is the sacrifice made by almost every man of classical learning in Germany, though to be sure the sacrifice of the enjoyments of friendly intercourse with mankind to letters is paying much less dear for fame here than the same thing would be in America. For my own part I am sorry I came here, because I was too old to be *upset;* like a horseshoe worn thin, I shall break as soon as I begin to wear on the other side: it makes me very restless at this period of my life to find that I know nothing. I would not have wished to have made the discovery unless I could at the same time have been allowed to remain in some place where I could get rid of my ignorance; and, now that I must go from Göttingen, I have no hope of doing that.

The following from Edward Everett carries the war yet farther into Africa, and criticises not merely American colleges, but also secondary schools: —

GÖTTINGEN, September 17, 1817.

You must not laugh at me for proceeding to business the first thing, and informing you in some sort as an argument, that, if I have been unreasonable in prolonging my stay here, I have at least passed my time not wholly to disadvantage, — that I received this morning my diploma as Doctor of Philosophy of this University, the first American, and as far as I know, Englishman, on whom it has ever been conferred. You will perhaps have heard that it was my intention to have passed from this University to that of Oxford, and to have spent this winter there. I have altered this determination for the sake of joining forces with Theodore Lyman at Paris this winter; and as he proposes to pass the ensuing summer in traveling in the South of France, I shall take that opportunity of going to England. It is true I should have liked to have gone directly from Göttingen to Oxford, to have kept the thread as it were unbroken, and gone on with my studies without any interruption. But I find, even at Paris, that I have no object there but study; and Professor Gaisford, at Oxford, writes me that it is every way better that I should be there in summer, as the Library is open a greater part of the day. Meanwhile, I try to feel duly grateful to Providence and my friends at home to whom I owe the opportunity of resorting to the famous fountains of European wisdom. The only painful feeling I carry with me is that I may not have health, or strength, or ability to fulfill the demands which such an opportunity

will create and justify. More is apt to be expected in such cases than it is possible to perform; besides that, after the schoolmaster is prepared for his duty, all depends upon whether the schoolboy is also prepared for his. You must not allow any report to the contrary to shake your faith in my good-will in the cause. Some remarks which I committed to paper at the request of my brother upon the subject of a National University, — an institution which by exciting an emulation in our quarter would be the best thing that could happen to Cambridge, — have, I hear, led some good men to believe that I was for deserting the service at Cambridge still more promptly than I had done at Boston, — a suggestion certainly too absurd to have been made, or to need to have been contradicted. However, still more important than all which national or state universities can do themselves immediately, is the necessity we must impose on the schools of reforming and improving themselves, or, rather, are the steps we must take to create good schools. All we have are bad, the common reading and writing ones not excepted; but of schools which we have to fit boys for college, I think the Boston Latin School and the Andover Academy are the only ones that deserve the name, and much I doubt if they deserve it. There is much truth in the remark so constantly made that we are not old enough for European perfection, but we are old enough to do well all it is worth while to do at all; and if a child here in eight years can read and speak Latin fluently, there is no

reason why our youth, after spending the same time on it, should know little or nothing about it. Professional education with us commences little or no earlier than it does here, and yet we approach it in all departments with a quarter part of the previous qualification which is here possessed. But also it is the weakness of mankind to do more than he is obliged to. The sort of obligation, to be sure, which is felt, differs with different spirits, and one is content to be the first man in his ward, one in his town, one in his county, another in his state. To all these degrees of dignity the present education is adequate; and we turn out reputable ministers, doctors, lawyers, professors, and schoolmasters, — men who get to be as wise at ye (*sic*) age of threescore as their fathers were at sixty, and who transmit the concern of life to their children in as good condition as they took it themselves. Meanwhile, the physical and commercial progress of ye (*sic*) country goes on, and more numerous doctors and more ministers are turned out, not more learned ones, to meet it. I blushed burning red to the ears the other day as a friend here laid his hand upon a newspaper containing the address of the students at Baltimore to Mr. Monroe, with the translation of it. It was less matter that the translation was not English; my German friend could not detect that. But that the original was not Latin I could not, alas! conceal. It was, unfortunately, just like enough to very bad Latin to make it impossible to pass it off for Kickapoo or Pottawattamy, which I was at first in-

clined to attempt. My German persisted in it that it was meant for Latin, and I wished in my heart that the Baltimore lads would stick to the example of their fathers and mob the Federalists, so they would give over this inhuman violence on the poor old Romans. I say nothing of ye (*sic*) address, for like all [illegible] it seems to have been ye (*sic*) object, in the majority of those productions, for those who made them to compliment, not the President, but themselves. It is a pity Dr. Kirkland's could not have been published first, to serve as a model how they might speak to the President without coldness on one side and adulation on the other, and of themselves without intrusion or forwardness.

The following letter transfers Edward Everett to Oxford, and gives in a somewhat trenchant way his unfavorable criticisms on the English universities of that day. He subsequently sent his son to Cambridge, England, but it was forty years later: —

OXFORD, June 6, 1818.

I have been over two Months in England, and am now visiting Oxford, having passed a Week in Cambridge. There is more teaching and more learning in our American Cambridge than there is in both the English Universities together, tho' between them they have four times Our number of Students. The misfortune for us is that our subjects are not so hopeful. We are obliged to do at

Cambridge [U. S.] that which is done at Eton and Westminster, at Winchester, Rugby, and Harrow, as well as at Oxford and Cambridge. Boys *may* go to Eton at 6, and do go often at 8, 10, and of Necessity before 12. They stay there under excellent Masters, 6 Years, and then come to the University. Whereas a smart clever boy with us, will learn out, even at Mr. Gould's, in 4 Years, and it was the boast of a very distinguished Man Named Bird [Samuel Bird, H. C., 1809], who was two Years before me at Cambridge, that he had fitted in 160 days. And I really think that I could, in six months teach a mature lad, who was willing to work hard, all the Latin and Greek requisite for admission.

This letter from Cogswell refers to George Bancroft, who was subsequently sent out by Harvard College, after his graduation in 1817, that he might be trained for the service of the institution.

GÖTTINGEN, May 4th, 1819.

It was truly generous and noble in the corporation to send out young Bancroft in the manner I understand they did; he will reward them for it. I thought very much of him, when I had him under my charge at Cambridge, and now he appears to me to promise a great deal more. I know not at whose suggestion this was done, but from the wisdom of the measure, I should conclude it must be the President's; it is applying the remedy exactly when it is most wanted, a taste once created for

classical learning at the College, and the means furnished for cultivating it, and the long desired reform in education in my opinion is virtually made; knowledge of every other kind may be as well acquired among us, as the purposes to which it is to be applied demand. We are not wanting in good lawyers or good physicians, and if we could but form a body of men of taste and letters, our literary reputation would not long remain at the low stand which it now is.

It appears from a letter of my father's, fourteen years later (November 21, 1833), that, after four years abroad, Mr. Bancroft's college career was a disappointment, and he was evidently regarded as a man spoiled by vanity and self-consciousness, and not commanding a strong influence over his pupils. My father wrote of these two teachers: —

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., 21 Nov., 1833.

Cogswell at New York to negotiate. He is much better fitted for a City. He loves society, bustle, fashion, polish, and good living. He would do best in some Mercantile House as a partner, say to Bankers like Prime, Ward, and King. He was at first a Scholar, a Lawyer in Maine. His wife dying, — sister to Dr. Nichols' wife (Gilman), — Mr. C. went abroad. Was supercargo, then a residing agent of Wm. Gray's in Europe, Holland, France, and Italy; was a good Merchant; expensive in his habits, he

did not accumulate; tired of roving, he accepted the office of Librarian here. He would not manage things under control of others, and so left College and sat up Round Hill School. His partner, Bancroft, — an unsuccessful scholar, pet of Dr. Kirkland's, who like Everett had four years abroad, mostly Germany, and at expense of College, — came here unfit for anything. His manners, style of writing, Theology, etc., bad, and as a Tutor only the laughing butt of all College. Such an one was easily marked as unfit for a School.

From whatever cause, he remained as tutor for one year only (1822–23), leaving Cambridge for the Round Hill School.

It would be curious to dwell on the later influence upon the college of the other men from whom so much was reasonably expected. Ticknor, the only one who was not a Harvard graduate, probably did most for Harvard of them all, for he became professor of Modern Languages, and introduced in that department the elective system, which there became really the nucleus of the expanded system of later days. Everett, when President, actually set himself against that method when the attempt had been made to enlarge it under Quincy. Cogswell was librarian from 1821 to 1823; left Harvard for the Round Hill School, and became ultimately the organizer of the Astor Library. Frederic

Henry Hedge, who had studied in Göttingen as a schoolboy and belonged to a younger circle, did not become professor until many years later.

But while the immediate results of personal service to the college on the part of this group of remarkable men may have been inadequate, — since even Ticknor, ere parting, had with the institution a disagreement never yet fully elucidated, — yet their collective influence both on Harvard University and on American education was enormous. They helped to break up that intellectual sterility which had begun to show itself during the isolation of a merely colonial life; they prepared the way for the vast modern growth of colleges, schools, and libraries in this country, and indirectly helped that birth of a literature which gave us Irving, Cooper, Bryant, and the "North American Review"; and culminated later in the brilliant Boston circle of authors, almost all of whom were Harvard men, and all of whom had felt the Harvard influence.

# XXIII

# OLD NEWPORT DAYS

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It was my good fortune, after discharge from the army during the Civil War, to dwell for a time under the hospitable roof of Mrs. Hannah Dame, in Newport, Rhode Island. Passing out of the front door one day, just as its bell rang, I saw before me one of the very handsomest men I had ever beheld, as I thought. He wore civilian dress, but with an unmistakable military air, and held out to me a card of introduction from a fellow officer. He had been discharged from the army on the expiration of his term of service with the regiment he had commanded in Frémont's Mountain Department. Being out of employment for a time, and unsettled, as many of us were at that period, he came back to his early training as a market gardener, and, having made the professional discovery that most of the cabbages eaten in Boston were brought from New York, while nearly all the cauliflowers sold in New York were sent thither from Boston, he formed the plan of establishing a market garden midway between the two cities, and supplying each place with its favorite vegetable. This he did successfully for ten years, and then

merged the enterprise in successive newer ones. In these he sometimes failed, but in the last one he succeeded where others had failed yet more completely, and astounded the nation by bringing the streets of New York into decent cleanliness and order for the first time on record. This man was Colonel George Edward Waring.

One of his minor achievements was that of organizing, at his house in Newport, the most efficient literary circle I ever knew, at a time when there were habitually more authors grouped in that city than anywhere else in America. But before giving a sketch of these persons, let me describe the house in which he received them. This house had been made internally the most attractive in Newport by the combined taste of himself and his wife, and was for a time the main centre of our simple and cordial group. In his study and elsewhere on the walls he had placed mottoes, taken partly from old English phrases and partly from the original Dutch, remembered almost from the cradle as coming from his Dutch maternal grandfather. Thus above his writing-desk the inscription read, *Misérable à mon gré qui n'a chez soi où estre à soi* (Alas for him who hath no home which is a home!). Under the mantelpiece and above the fireplace was the Dutch *Eigen haasd iss goud waard* (One's own hearth is worth

gold). In the dining-room there was inscribed above the fireplace, "Old wood to burn, Old wine to drink, Old friends to trust." Opposite this was again the Dutch *Praatjes vullen den buik neit* (Prattle does not fill the box). On two sides of the room there were, "Now good digestion wait on appetite, and health on both," and also "In every feast there are two guests to be entertained, the body and the soul." In almost every case the lettering of these mottoes was made into a decoration with peacock's feathers, and formed a series of charming welcomes quite in harmony with the unfailing cordiality of the host and the fine and hearty voice of the hostess.

It was at this house that there were to be found gathered, more frequently than anywhere else, the literary or artistic people who were then so abundant in Newport, — where no other house was to be compared with it except that of Mrs. Howe, who then lived in the country, and had receptions and a world of her own.

We had, for instance, Dr. J. G. Holland, now best known as the original founder of the "Century Magazine," then having but a fugitive literary fame based on books written under the name of Timothy Titcomb and entitled "Bitter-Sweet" and "Kathrina, Her Life and Mine." He was personally attractive because of his

melodious voice, which made him of peculiar value for singing on all boating excursions. There was Edwin P. Whipple, a man reared in business, not literature; but with an inexhaustible memory of books and a fertile gift for producing them, especially those requiring personal anecdote and plenty of it. There was Dr. O. W. Holmes, who came to Newport as the guest of the Astor family, parents of the present English author of that name. At their house I spent one evening with Holmes, who was in his most brilliant mood, at the end of which he had talked himself into such an attack of asthma that he had to bid adieu to Newport forever, after an early breakfast the next morning.

There was the Reverend Charles T. Brooks, a man of angelic face and endless German translations, who made even Jean Paul readable and also unbelievable. There was Professor George Lane, from Harvard, a man so full of humor that people bought his new Latin Grammar merely for the fun to be got out of its notes. There was La Farge, just passing through the change which made a great artist out of a book-lover and a student of languages. He alone on this list made Newport his home for years, and reared his gifted and attractive children there, and it was always interesting to see how, one by one, they developed into artists or priests.

There was George Boker, of Philadelphia, a young man of fortune, handsome, indolent, as poetic as a rich young man could spare time to be, and one whose letters now help to make attractive that most amusing book, the "Memoirs of Charles Godfrey Leland." There was my refined and accomplished schoolmate and chum, Charles Perkins, who trained himself in Italian art and tried rather ineffectually to introduce it into the public schools of Boston and upon the outside of the Art Museum. There was Tom Appleton, the man of two continents, and Clarence King, the explorer of this one, and a charming story-teller, by the way. Let me pause longer over one or two of these many visitors.

One of them was long held the most readable of American biographers, but is now being strangely forgotten, — the most American of all transplanted Englishmen, James Parton, the historian. He has apparently dropped from our current literature and even from popular memory. I can only attribute this to a certain curious combination of strength and weakness which was more conspicuous in him than in most others. He always appeared to me the most absolutely truthful being I had ever encountered; no temptation, no threats, could move him from his position; but when he came

in contact with a man of wholly opposite temperament, as, for instance, General Benjamin F. Butler, the other seemed able to wind Parton round his fingers. This would be the harder to believe had not Butler exerted something of the same influence on Wendell Phillips, another man of proud and yet trustful temperament. Furthermore, Parton was absolutely enthralled in a similar way through his chief object of literary interest, perhaps as being the man in the world most unlike him, Voltaire. On the other hand, no one could be more devoted to self-sacrifice than Parton when it became clear and needful. Day after day one would see him driving in the roads around Newport, with his palsy-stricken and helpless wife, ten years older than himself and best known to the world as Fanny Fern, — he sitting upright as a flagstaff and looking forward in deep absorption, settling some Voltairean problem a hundred years older than his own domestic sorrow.

I find in my diary (June 25, 1871) only this reference to one of the disappointing visitors at Newport: —

"Bret Harte is always simple and modest. He is terribly tired of 'The Heathen Chinee,' and almost annoyed at its popularity when better things of his have been less liked" — the usual experience of authors.

I find again, May 15, 1871: "I went up last Wednesday night to the Grand Army banquet [in Boston] and found it pleasant. The receptions of Hooker and Burnside were especially ardent. At our table we were about to give three cheers for Bret Harte as a man went up to the chief table. It turned out to be Mayor Gaston." This mistake, however, showed Harte's ready popularity at first, though some obstacles afterwards tended to diminish it. Among these obstacles was to be included, no doubt, the San Francisco newspapers, which were constantly showered among us from the Pacific shores with all the details of the enormous debts which Bret Harte had left behind him, and which he never in his life, so far as I could hear, made a serious effort to discharge. Through some distrust either of my friendship or of my resources, he never by any chance even offered, I believe, to borrow a dollar of me; but our more generous companion, George Waring, was not so fortunate.

Another person, of nobler type, appears but imperfectly in my letters, namely, Miss Charlotte Cushman. I find, to be sure, the following penetrating touches from a companion who had always that quality, and who says of Miss Cushman, in her diary: "She is very large, looks like an elderly man, with gray hair and very red

cheeks — full of action and gesture — acts a dog just as well as a man or woman. She seems large-hearted, kind, and very bright and quick — looks in splendid health. She will be here for this month, but may take a house and return." This expectation was fulfilled, and I find that the same authority later compared Miss Cushman in appearance to "an old boy given to eating apples and snowballing"; and, again, gave this description after seeing Miss Cushman's new house: "The wildest turn of an insane kaleidoscope — the petrified antics of a crazy coon with a dance of intoxicated lightning-rods breaking out over the roof." This youthful impulsiveness was a part of her, and I remember that once, as we were driving across the first beach at Newport, Miss Cushman looked with delight across the long strip of sand, which the advancing waves were rapidly diminishing, as the little boys were being driven ashore by them, and exclaimed, "How those children have enjoyed running their little risk of danger! I know I did when I was a boy," and there seemed nothing incongruous in the remark, nor yet when she turned to me afterwards and asked, seriously, whether I thought suicide absolutely unpardonable in a person proved to be hopelessly destined to die of cancer, — a terror with which she was long haunted. Again, I remember at

one fashionable reception how Miss Cushman came with John Gilbert, the veteran actor, as her guest, and how much higher seemed their breeding, on the whole, than that of the mere fashionables of a day.

Kate Field, who has been somewhat unwisely canonized by an injudicious annotator, was much in Newport, equally fearless in body and mind, and perhaps rather limited than enlarged by early contact with Italy and Mrs. Browning. She would come in from a manly boating-trip and fling herself on the sofa of the daintiest hostess, where the subsequent arrival of the best-bred guests did not disturb her from her position; but nothing would have amused her more than the deification which she received after death from some later adorers of her own sex.

I find the following sketches of different Newport visitors in a letter dated September 2, 1869: —

"We had an elder poet in Mr. [William Cullen] Bryant, on whom I called, and to my great surprise he returned it. I never saw him before. There is a little hardness about him, and he seems like one who has been habitually bored, but he is refined and gentle — thinner, older, and more sunken than his pictures — eyes not fine, head rather narrow and prominent; delicate in outline. He is quite

agreeable, and —— chatted to him quite easily. I saw him several times, but he does not warm one.

"At Governor Morgan's I went to a reception for the [General] Grants. He is a much more noticeable man than I expected, and I should think his head would attract attention anywhere, and Richard Greenough [the sculptor] thought the same — and so imperturbable — without even a segar! Mrs. Grant I found intelligent and equable. . . . Sherman was there, too, the antipodes of Grant; nervous and mobile, looking like a country schoolmaster. He said to Bryant, in my hearing, 'Yes, indeed! I know Mr. Bryant; he 's one of the veterans! When I was a boy at West Point he was a veteran. He used to edit a newspaper then!'

"This quite ignored Mr. Bryant's poetic side, which Sherman possibly may not have quite enjoyed. Far more interesting than this, I thought, was a naval reception where Farragut was given profuse honors, yet held them all as a trivial pleasure compared to an interview with his early teacher, Mr. Charles Folsom, the superintendent of the University Printing-Office at Cambridge. To him the great admiral returned again and again, and we saw them sitting with hands clasped, and serving well enough, as some one suggested, for a group of 'War and Peace,' such as the sculptors were just then portraying."

Most interesting, too, I found on one occasion, at Charles Perkins's, the companionship

of two young Englishmen, James Bryce and Albert Dicey, both since eminent, but then just beginning their knowledge of this country. I vividly remember how Dicey came in rubbing his hands with delight, saying that Bryce had just heard a boarder at the hotel where he was staying say *Eurōpean* twice, and had stopped to make a note of it in his diary. But I cannot allow further space to them, nor even to Mr. George Bancroft, about whom the reader will find a more ample sketch in this volume (page 95). I will, however, venture to repeat one little scene illustrating with what parental care he used to accompany young ladies on horseback in his old age, galloping over the Newport beaches. On one of these occasions, after he had dismounted to adjust his fair companion's stirrup, he was heard to say to her caressingly, "Don't call me Mr. Bancroft, call me George!"

In regard to my friend, Mrs. Julia Ward Howe and her Newport life, I have written so fully of her in the article on page 287 of this volume that I shall hardly venture it again. Nor have I space in which to dwell on the further value to our little Newport circle of such women as Katharine P. Wormeley, the well-known translator of Balzac and Molière and the author of "Hospital Transports" during the war; or of the three accomplished Woolsey

sisters, of whom the eldest, under the name of "Susan Coolidge," became a very influential writer for young people. She came first to Newport as the intimate friend of Mrs. Helen Maria Fiske Hunt, who was more generally known for many years as "H. H." The latter came among us as the widow of one of the most distinguished officers whom the West Point service had reared. She was destined in all to spend five winters at Newport, and entered upon her literary life practically at that time. She lived there as happily, perhaps, as she could have dwelt in any town which she could christen "Sleepy Hollow," as she did Newport; and where she could look from her window upon the fashionable avenue and see, she said, such "Headless Horsemen" as Irving described as having haunted the valley of that name.

After her second marriage she lived far away at the middle and then at the extreme western part of the continent, and we met but few times. She wrote to me freely, however, and I cannot do better than close by quoting from this brilliant woman's very words her description of the manner in which she wrote the tale "Ramona," now apparently destined to be her source of permanent fame. I do not know in literary history so vivid a picture of what may well be called spiritual inspiration in an impetuous woman's soul.

THE BERKELEY, February 5, 1884.

I am glad you say you are rejoiced that I am writing a story. But about the not hurrying it — I want to tell you something — You know I have for three or four years longed to write a story that should "tell" on the Indian question. But I knew I could not do it. knew I had no background — no local color for it.

Last Spring, in So. Cal. [Southern California] I began to feel that I had — that the scene laid there — & the old Mexican life mixed in with just enough Indian, to enable me to tell what had happened to them — would be the very perfection of coloring. You know I have now lived six months in So. Cal.

Still I did not see my way clear; got no plot; till one morning late last October, before I was wide awake, the whole plot flashed into my mind — not a vague one — the whole story just as it stands to-day: in less than five minutes: as if some one spoke it. I sprang up, went to my husband's room, and told him: I was half frightened. From that time till I came here it haunted me, becoming more and more vivid. I was impatient to get at it. I wrote the first word of it Dec. 1st. As soon as I began it seemed impossible to write fast enough. In spite of myself, I write faster than I would write a letter. I write two thousand to three thousand words in a morning, and I *cannot* help it. It racks me like a struggle with an outside power. I cannot help being superstitious about it. I have never done

*half* the amount of work in the same time. Ordinarily it would be a simple impossibility. Twice since beginning it I have broken down utterly for a while — with a cold ostensibly, but with great nervous prostration added. What I have to endure in holding myself away from it, afternoons, on the days I am compelled to be in the house, no words can tell. It is like keeping away from a lover, whose hand I can reach!

Now you will ask what sort of English it is I write at this lightning speed. So far as I can tell, the best I ever wrote! I have read it aloud as I have gone on, to one friend of keen literary perceptions and judgment, the most purely intellectual woman I know — Mrs. Trimble. She says it is smooth, strong, clear — "Tremendous" is her frequent epithet. I read the first ten chapters to Miss Woolsey this last week — she has been spending a few days with me . . . but she says, "Far better than anything you ever have done."

The success of it — if it succeeds — will be that I do not even suggest my Indian history till the interest is so assured in the heroine — and hero — that people will not lay the book down. There is but one Indian in the story.

Every now & then I force myself to stop & write a short story or a bit of verse: I can't bear the strain: but the instant I open the pages of the other I write as I am writing now — as fast as I could copy! What do you think? Am I possessed of a demon? Is it a freak of mental disturbance, or what?

I have the feeling that if I could only read it to you, you would know. If it is as good as Mrs. Trimble, Mr. Jackson & Miss Woolsey think, I shall be indeed rewarded, for it will "tell." But I can't believe it is. I am uneasy about it — but try as I may, all I can, I cannot write slowly for more than a few moments. I sit down at 9.30 or 10, & it is one before I know it. In good weather I then go out, after lunching, and keep out, religiously till five: but there have not been more than three out of eight good days all winter: — and the days when I am shut up, in my room from two till five, alone — with my Ramona and Alessandro, and cannot go along with them on their journey, are maddening.

"Fifty-two last October and I 'm not a bit steadier-headed, you see, than ever! I don't know whether to send this or burn it up. Don't laugh at me whatever you do.

Yours always, H. J.

# XXIV

# A HALF-CENTURY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

# A HALF-CENTURY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

## (1857–1907)

### I

THE brilliant French author, Stendhal, used to describe his ideal of a happy life as dwelling in a Paris garret and writing endless plays and novels. This might seem to any Anglo-American a fantastic wish; and no doubt the early colonists on this side of the Atlantic Ocean, after fighting through the Revolution by the aid of Rochambeau and his Frenchmen, might have felt quite out of place had they followed their triumphant allies back to Europe, in 1781, and inspected their way of living. We can hardly wonder, on the other hand, that the accomplished French traveler, Philarète Chasles, on visiting this country in 1851, looked through the land in despair at not finding a humorist, although the very boy of sixteen who stood near him at the rudder of a Mississippi steamboat may have been he who was destined to amuse the civilized world under the name of Mark Twain.[1]

[1] "Toute l'Amérique ne possède pas un humoriste." *Études sur la Littérature et les Mœurs des Anglo-Américains*, Paris, 1851.

That which was, however, to astonish most seriously all European observers who were watching the dawn of the young American republic, was its presuming to develop itself in its own original way, and not conventionally. It was destined, as Cicero said of ancient Rome, to produce its statesmen and orators first, and its poets later. Literature was not inclined to show itself with much promptness, during and after long years of conflict, first with the Indians, then with the mother country. There were individual instances of good writing: Judge Sewall's private diaries, sometimes simple and noble, sometimes unconsciously eloquent, often infinitely amusing; William Byrd's and Sarah Knight's piquant glimpses of early Virginia travel; Cotton Mather's quaint and sometimes eloquent passages; Freneau's poetry, from which Scott and Campbell borrowed phrases. Behind all, there was the stately figure of Jonathan Edwards standing gravely in the background, like a monk at the cloister door, with his treatise on the "Freedom of the Will."

Thus much for the scanty literary product; but when we turn to look for a new-born statesmanship in a nation equally new-born, the fact suddenly strikes us that the intellectual strength of the colonists lay there. The same discovery astonished England through the pamphlet works

of Jay, Lee, and Dickinson; destined to be soon followed up with a long series of equally strong productions, to which Lord Chatham paid that fine tribute in his speech before the House of Lords on January 20, 1775. "I must declare and avow," he said, "that in all my reading and observation — and it has been my favorite study — I have read Thucydides and have studied and admired the master-states of the world — for solidity of reasoning, force of sagacity, and wisdom of conclusion, under such a complication of difficult circumstances, no nation, or body of men, can stand in preference to the general Congress of Philadelphia." Yet it is to be noticed further that here, as in other instances, the literary foresight in British criticism had already gone in advance of even the statesman's judgment, for Horace Walpole, the most brilliant of the literary men of his time, had predicted to his friend Mason, two years before the Declaration of Independence, that there would one day be a Thucydides in Boston and a Xenophon in New York.

It is interesting to know that such predictions were by degrees shadowed forth even among children in America, as they certainly were among those of us who, living in Cambridge as boys, were permitted the privilege of looking over whole boxes of Washington's yet unprinted

letters in the hands of our kind neighbor, Jared Sparks (1834–37); manuscripts whose curved and varied signatures we had the inexhaustible boyish pleasure of studying and comparing; as we had also that of enjoying the pithy wisdom of Franklin in his own handwriting a few years later (1840), in the hands of the same kind and neighborly editor. But it was not always recognized by those who grew up in the new-born nation that in the mother country itself a period of literary ebb tide was then prevailing. When Fisher Ames, being laid on the shelf as a Federalist statesman, wrote the first really important essay on American Literature, — an essay published in 1809, after his death, — he frankly treated literature itself as merely one of the ornaments of despotism. He wrote of it, "The time seems to be near, and, perhaps, is already arrived, when poetry, at least poetry of transcendent merit, will be considered among the lost arts. It is a long time since England has produced a first-rate poet. If America had not to boast at all what our parent country boasts no longer, it will not be thought a proof of the deficiency of our genius." Believing as he did, that human freedom could never last long in a democracy, Ames thought that perhaps, when liberty had given place to an emperor, this monarch might desire to see splendor in his

court, and to occupy his subjects with the cultivation of the arts and sciences. At any rate, he maintained, "After some ages we shall have many poor and a few rich, many grossly ignorant, a considerable number learned, and a few eminently learned. Nature, never prodigal of her gifts, will produce some men of genius, who will be admired and imitated." The first part of this prophecy failed, but the latter part fulfilled itself in a manner quite unexpected.

II

The point unconsciously ignored by Fisher Ames, and by the whole Federalist party of his day, was that there was already being created on this side of the ocean, not merely a new nation, but a new temperament. How far this temperament was to arise from a change of climate, and how far from a new political organization, no one could then foresee, nor is its origin yet fully analyzed; but the fact itself is now coming to be more and more recognized. It may be that Nature said, at about that time, "'Thus far the English is my best race; but we have had Englishmen enough; now for another turning of the globe, and a further novelty. We need something with a little more buoyancy than the Englishman: let us lighten the structure, even at some peril in the process. Put in

one drop more of nervous fluid and make the American.' With that drop, a new range of promise opened on the human race, and a lighter, finer, more highly organized type of mankind was born." This remark, which appeared first in the "Atlantic Monthly," called down the wrath of Matthew Arnold, who missed the point entirely in calling it "tall talk" or a species of brag, overlooking the fact that it was written as a physiological caution addressed to this nervous race against overworking its children in school. In reality, it was a point of the greatest importance. If Americans are to be merely duplicate Englishmen, Nature might have said, the experiment is not so very interesting, but if they are to represent a new human type, the sooner we know it, the better. No one finally did more toward recognizing this new type than did Matthew Arnold himself, when he afterwards wrote, in 1887, "Our countrymen [namely, the English], with a thousand good qualities, are really, perhaps, a good deal wanting in lucidity and flexibility"; and again in the same essay, "The whole American nation may be called 'intelligent,' that is to say, 'quick.'"[1] This would seem to yield the whole point between himself and the American writer whom he had criticised,

[1] *Nineteenth Century*, xxii, 324, 319.

and who happened to be the author of this present volume.

One of the best indications of this very difference of temperament, even to this day, is the way in which American journalists and magazinists are received in England, and their English compeers among ourselves. An American author connected with the "St. Nicholas Magazine" was told by a London publisher, within my recollection, that the plan of the periodical was essentially wrong. "The pages of riddles at the end, for instance," he said, "no child would ever guess them"; and although the American assured him that they were guessed regularly every month in twenty thousand families or more, the publisher still shook his head. As to the element of humor itself, it used to be the claim of a brilliant New York talker that he had dined through three English counties on the strength of the jokes which he had found in the corners of an old American "Farmer's Almanac" which he had happened to put into his trunk when packing for his European trip.

From Brissot and Volney, Chastellux and Crèvecœur, down to Ampère and De Tocqueville, there was a French appreciation, denied to the English, of this lighter quality; and this certainly seems to indicate that the change in the Anglo-American temperament had already

begun to show itself. Ampère especially notices what he calls "une veine européenne" among the educated classes. Many years after, when Mrs. Frances Anne Kemble, writing in reference to the dramatic stage, pointed out that the theatrical instinct of Americans created in them an affinity for the French which the English, hating exhibitions of emotion and self-display, did not share, she recognized in our nation this tinge of the French temperament, while perhaps giving to it an inadequate explanation.

III

The local literary prominence given, first to Philadelphia by Franklin and Brockden Brown, and then to New York by Cooper and Irving, was in each case too detached and fragmentary to create more than these individual fames, however marked or lasting these may be. It required time and a concentrated influence to constitute a literary group in America. Bryant and Channing, with all their marked powers, served only as a transition to it. Yet the group was surely coming, and its creation has perhaps never been put in so compact a summary as that made by that clear-minded ex-editor of the "Atlantic Monthly," the late Horace Scudder. He said, "It is too early to make a full survey of the immense importance to American

letters of the work done by half-a-dozen great men in the middle of this century. The body of prose and verse created by them is constituting the solid foundation upon which other structures are to rise; the humanity which it holds is entering into the life of the country, and no material invention, or scientific discovery, or institutional prosperity, or accumulation of wealth will so powerfully affect the spiritual well-being of the nation for generations to come."

The geographical headquarters of this particular group was Boston, of which Cambridge and Concord may be regarded for this purpose as suburbs. Such a circle of authors as Emerson, Hawthorne, Longfellow, Lowell, Whittier, Alcott, Thoreau, Parkman, and others had never before met in America; and now that they have passed away, no such local group anywhere remains: nor has the most marked individual genius elsewhere — such, for instance, as that of Poe or Whitman — been the centre of so conspicuous a combination. The best literary representative of this group of men in bulk was undoubtedly the "Atlantic Monthly," to which almost every one of them contributed, and of which they made up the substantial opening strength.

With these there was, undoubtedly, a sec-

ondary force developed at that period in a remarkable lecture system, which spread itself rapidly over the country, and in which most of the above authors took some part and several took leading parts, these lectures having much formative power over the intellect of the nation. Conspicuous among the lecturers also were such men as Gough, Beecher, Chapin, Whipple, Holland, Curtis, and lesser men who are now collectively beginning to fade into oblivion. With these may be added the kindred force of Abolitionists, headed by Wendell Phillips and Frederick Douglass, whose remarkable powers drew to their audiences many who did not agree with them. Women like Lucretia Mott, Anna Dickinson, and Lucy Stone joined the force. These lectures were inseparably linked with literature as a kindred source of popular education; they were subject, however, to the limitation of being rather suggestive than instructive, because they always came in a detached way and so did not favor coherent thinking. The much larger influence now exerted by courses of lectures in the leading cities does more to strengthen the habit of consecutive thought than did the earlier system; and such courses, joined with the great improvement in public schools, are assisting vastly in the progress of public education. The leader who most distin-

guished himself in this last direction was, doubtless, Horace Mann, who died in 1859. The influence of American colleges, while steadily maturing into universities all over the country, has made itself felt more and more obviously, especially as these colleges have with startling suddenness and comprehensiveness extended their privileges to women also, whether in the form of coeducation or of institutions for women only.

For many years, the higher intellectual training of Americans was obtained almost entirely through periods of study in Europe, especially in Germany. Men, of whom Everett, Ticknor, Cogswell, and Bancroft were the pioneers, beginning in 1818 or thereabouts, discovered that Germany and not England must be made our national model in this higher education; and this discovery was strengthened by the number of German refugees, often highly trained men, who sought this country for political safety. The influence of German literature on the American mind was undoubtedly at its highest point half a century ago, and the passing away of the great group of German authors then visible was even more striking than have been the corresponding changes in England and America; but the leadership of Germany in purely scientific thought and invention has kept

on increasing, so that the mental tie between that nation and our own was perhaps never stronger than now.

In respect to literature, the increased tendency to fiction, everywhere visible, has nowhere been more marked than in America. Since the days of Cooper and Mrs. Stowe, the recognized leader in this department has been Mr. Howells; that is, if we base leadership on higher standards than that of mere comparison of sales. The actual sale of copies in this department of literature has been greater in certain cases than the world has before seen; but it has rarely occurred that books thus copiously multiplied have taken very high rank under more deliberate criticism. In some cases, as in that of Bret Harte, an author has won fame in early life by the creation of a few striking characters, and has then gone on reproducing them without visible progress; and this result has been most apt to occur wherever British praise has come in strongly, that being often more easily won by a few interesting novelties than by anything deeper in the way of local coloring or permanent delineation.

IV

It is sometimes said that there was never yet a great migration which did not result in some

new form of national genius; and this should be true in America, if anywhere. He who lands from Europe on our shores perceives a difference in the sky above his head; the height seems greater, the zenith farther off, the horizon wall steeper. With this result on the one side, and the vast and constant mixture of races on the other, there must inevitably be a change. No portion of our immigrant body desires to retain its national tongue; all races wish their children to learn the English language as soon as possible, yet no imported race wishes its children to take the British race, as such, for models. Our newcomers unconsciously say with that keen thinker, David Wasson, "The Englishman is undoubtedly a wholesome figure to the mental eye; but will not twenty million copies of him do, for the present?" The Englishman's strong point is his vigorous insularity; that of the American his power of adaptation. Each of these attitudes has its perils. The Englishman stands firmly on his feet, but he who merely does this never advances. The American's disposition is to step forward even at the risk of a fall. Washington Irving, who seemed at first to so acute a French observer as Chasles a mere reproduction of Pope and Addison, wrote to John Lothrop Motley two years before his own death, "You are properly

sensible of the high calling of the American press, — that rising tribunal before which the whole world is to be summoned, its history to be revised and rewritten, and the judgment of past ages to be canceled or confirmed." For one who can look back sixty years to a time when the best literary periodical in America was called "The Albion," it is difficult to realize how the intellectual relations of the two nations are now changed. M. D. Conway once pointed out that the English magazines, such as the "Contemporary Review" and the "Fortnightly," were simply circular letters addressed by a few cultivated gentlemen to the fellow members of their respective London clubs. Where there is an American periodical, on the other hand, the most striking contribution may proceed from a previously unknown author, and may turn out to have been addressed practically to all the world.

So far as the intellectual life of a nation exhibits itself in literature, England may always have one advantage over us, — if advantage it be, — that of possessing in London a recognized publishing centre, where authors, editors, and publishers are all brought together. In America, the conditions of our early political activity have supplied us with a series of such centres, in a smaller way, beginning, doubtless,

with Philadelphia, then changing to New York, then to Boston, and again reverting, in some degree, to New York. I say "in some degree" because Washington has long been the political centre of the nation, and tends more and more to occupy the same central position in respect to science, at least; while Western cities, notably Chicago and San Francisco, tend steadily to become literary centres for the wide regions they represent. Meanwhile the vast activities of journalism, the readiness of communication everywhere, the detached position of colleges, with many other influences, decentralize literature more and more. Emerson used to say that Europe stretched to the Alleghanies, but this at least has been corrected, and the national spirit is coming to claim the whole continent for its own.

There is undoubtedly a tendency in the United States to transfer intellectual allegiance, for a time, to science rather than to literature. This may be only a swing of the pendulum; but its temporary influence has nowhere been better defined or characterized than by the late Clarence King, formerly director of the United States Geological Survey, who wrote thus a little before his death: "With all its novel modern powers and practical sense, I am forced to admit that the purely scientific brain is miserably

mechanical; it seems to have become a splendid sort of self-directed machine, an incredible automaton, grinding on with its analyses or constructions. But for pure sentiment, for all that spontaneous, joyous Greek waywardness of fancy, for the temperature of passion and the subtler thrill of ideality, you might as well look to a wrought-iron derrick."

Whatever charges can be brought against the American people, no one has yet attributed to them any want of self-confidence or self-esteem; and though this trait may be sometimes unattractive, the philosophers agree that it is the only path to greatness. "The only nations which ever come to be called historic," says Tolstoi in his "Anna Karenina," "are those which recognize the importance and worth of their own institutions." Emerson, putting the thing more tersely, as is his wont, says that "no man can do anything well who does not think that what he does is the centre of the visible universe." The history of the American republic was really the most interesting in the world, from the outset, were it only from the mere fact that however small its scale, it yet showed a self-governing people in a condition never before witnessed on the globe; and so to this is now added the vaster contemplation of it as a nation of seventy millions rapidly growing more and

more. If there is no interest in the spectacle of such a nation, laboring with all its might to build up an advanced civilization, then there is nothing interesting on earth. The time will come when all men will wonder, not that Americans attached so much importance to their national development at this period, but that they appreciated it so little. Canon Zincke has computed that in 1980 the English-speaking population of the globe will number, at the present rate of progress, one thousand millions, and that of this number eight hundred millions will dwell in the United States. No plans can be too far-seeing, no toils and sacrifices too great, in establishing this vast future civilization. It is in this light, for instance, that we must view the immense endowments of Mr. Carnegie, which more than fulfill the generalization of the acute author of a late Scotch novel, "The House with Green Shutters," who says that while a Scotchman has all the great essentials for commercial success, "his combinations are rarely Napoleonic until he becomes an American."

When one looks at the apparently uncertain, but really tentative steps taken by the trustees of the Carnegie Institution at Washington, one sees how much must yet lie before us in our provisions for intellectual progress. The numerical increase of our common schools and uni-

versities is perhaps as rapid as is best, and the number of merely scientific societies is large, but the provision for the publication of works of real thought and literature is still far too small. The endowment of the Smithsonian Institution now extends most comprehensively over all the vast historical work in American history, now so widely undertaken, and the Carnegie Institution bids fair to provide well for purely scientific work and the publication of its results. But the far more difficult task of developing and directing pure literature is as yet hardly attempted. Our magazines tend more and more to become mainly picture-books, and our really creative authors are geographically scattered and, for the most part, wholesomely poor. We should always remember, moreover, what is true especially in these works of fiction, that not only individual books, but whole schools of them, emerge and disappear, like the flash of a revolving light; you must make the most of it while you have it. "The highways of literature are spread over," said Holmes, "with the shells of dead novels, each of which has been swallowed at a mouthful by the public, and is done with."

In America, as in England, the leading literary groups are just now to be found less among the poets than among the writers of

prose fiction. Of these younger authors, we have in America such men as Winston Churchill, Robert Grant, Hamlin Garland, Owen Wister, Arthur S. Pier, and George Wasson; any one of whom may at any moment surprise us by doing something better than the best he has before achieved. The same promise of a high standard is visible in women, among whom may be named not merely those of maturer standing, as Harriet Prescott Spofford, who is the leader, but her younger sisters, Mary Wilkins Freeman, Edith Wharton, and Josephine Preston Peabody. The drama also is advancing with rapid steps, and is likely to be still more successful in such hands as those of William Vaughn Moody, Ridgely Torrence, and Percy McKaye. The leader of English dramatic criticism, William Archer, found within the last year, as he tells us, no less than eight or nine notable American dramas in active representation on the stage, whereas eight years earlier there was but one.

Similar signs of promise are showing themselves in the direction of literature, social science, and higher education generally, all of which have an honored representative, still in middle life, in Professor George E. Woodberry. Professor Newcomb has just boldly pointed out that we have intellectually grown, as a nation, "from the high school of our Revolutionary ancestors to

the college; from the college we have grown to the university stage. Now we have grown to a point where we need something beyond the university." What he claims for science is yet more needed in the walks of pure literature, and is there incomparably harder to attain, since it has there to deal with that more subtle and vaster form of mental action which culminates in Shakespeare instead of Newton. This higher effort, which the French Academy alone even attempts, — however it may fail in the accomplished results, — may at least be kept before us as an ideal for American students and writers, even should its demands be reduced to something as simple as those laid down by Coleridge when he announced his ability to "inform the dullest writer how he might write an interesting book." "Let him," says Coleridge, "relate the events of his own life with honesty, not disguising the feeling that accompanied them."[1] Thus simple, it would seem, are the requirements for a really good book; but, alas! who is to fulfill them? Yet if anywhere, why not in America?

[1] *Quarterly Review*, xcviii, 456.

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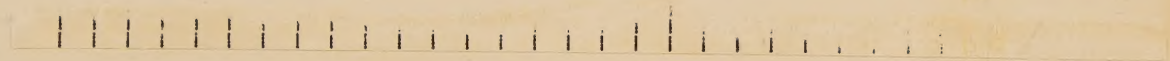

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